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## ONLY SHEEP NEED LEADERS



# All realists now

Twenty years ago Labour MPs elected a young leader who described himself as a pragmatist. When Wilson became Prime Minister, it was quickly made clear that pragmatism had a particular meaning for him — that his government would try to run the affairs of British capitalism in accordance with the needs of its owning class and not by any reference to inconvenient, grass roots theories. Under Wilson and later Callaghan Labour was indeed pragmatic, for they fought the British working class over wages, they broke strikes with troops, they cut services, supported the American war effort in Vietnam, they introduced racist immigration laws...

Since those pragmatic days we have had another government, which assures us it is realistic. There is, the Tories assert, no other way than to behave roughly like their Labour predecessors in office — hold back wages, cut social services, fight a war in the Falklands...

And now the Labour Party, in the first contest under its new system of popular voting in the party, has elected a leader who says that he also is a realist, although he has coupled the word with patriotism and socialism, which shows that he has a truly pragmatic disregard for the dictionary of politics. The battle between Thatcher and Kinnock promises to be a clash in which victory — which means the majority of votes of politically ignorant workers — will go to whoever can lay claim to the greater degree of hard-headed realism.

Well if they are all to be realists now it is fair to ask what the word means. For the Labour Party, after its crushing defeat in June, there is one obvious and immediate interpretation. "We can't" right-wing realist John Golding shouted to their Conference, "afford any more to fight elections on a like it or lump it basis". Golding was not the only speaker to urge the delegates to consider first the need to win votes; Labour is a party which forms its policies, not on political principles or on confused pioneer notions about a radically different society, but on what the voters will support. Power is their priority. This might upset some of the party members who joined under the delusion that Labour stood for socialism and it would certainly

confuse workers who voted Labour on the promise that it would lead to a more equal social system and who find their living standards under attack. But all that is a small price to pay in the cause of realism.

Kinnock is not just a realist but a realist of the Left, which means that his "realism" has dawned only after he has trodden a familiar path from left-wing bluster to the point at which he must concede that a more "moderate" attitude is likelier to win power. Like pragmatic Wilson in 1963, Kinnock's first announced priority is to be Prime Minister, as soon as possible. In his first speech as leader he talked of the need to "produce our way to prosperity" (alliteration is a habit of Kinnock's; it is in fact popular with a lot of politicians — it often goes down well with reporters and helps to conceal the emptiness of the words) as if the poverty of capitalism's peoples has something to do with the level of production. In deference to his waning reputation as a firebrand of the Left, he needed to mention the word socialism, describing it in typical obscure fashion as "... real patriotism, when the sick, old and young and poor have their just share of the wealth of this massively prosperous country" — as if socialism is not a world society of free access but a re-adjustment of some workers' poverty.

Behind these fine words and ringing declarations, and beyond the sycophantic ovations they provoke, the gruesome reality of capitalism persists. As only one expression of poverty, in this country during the coming winter old workers, whose usefulness to the ruling class is at an end, will die from hypothermia. Thousands of workers in this country are homeless, millions live in festering slums, millions more in homes which are slums but escape the official definition of slumdom, millions live in cramped and jerry-built neurosis manufactories which are called homes. War is a continuing threat, backed by an international nuclear arsenal which could quickly paralyse human society. Tens of millions die each year because they can't get enough to eat to stay alive. The "realism" of Thatcher and Kinnock has no relevance to these problems. To assert, in the face of all the evidence, that capitalism can be

made to work in the interests of the majority is not realistic; it is to propagate a cruel fantasy.

The efforts of socialists to expose that fantasy are hampered by the workers' reluctance to recognise where their interests lie. In the last general election, for example, the best manifesto was that produced by the Socialist Party of Great Britain; it was the only one to analyse the problems of modern society and to point to the conclusion that socialism is the only solution. Yet fewer than one hundred workers voted for the case in that manifesto; the rest preferred the discredited fantasies of the Tory, Labour and Alliance parties.

The vital work of the socialist movement is to encourage the workers to face the reality that their problems can be solved, and they can live a full, humane life, only through a social revolution which will overthrow the society of class ownership of the means of life. When these are the property of the entire human race there will be a world free of war, poverty, repression, of the tensions and ugliness which we live with today. In socialism human beings will work and live together in harmony for the common well-being. Social relationships will be fashioned by the basis that wealth will be produced for its usefulness to people and not for the profit of a minority. In an unprecedented freedom, humans will be able to discover their true abilities; there will be a veritable explosion of creativity and people will look back on capitalism, with its wars, its poverty, its fear, its posturing leaders and its compliant, suffering people, as a black nightmare.

To attain that condition, the world's workers must look beyond the deceptions of the leaders, to confidence in their own ability to run society in the interests of the majority. They must grasp the fact that capitalism is decadent, reactionary and repressive and that progress lies with the revolution for socialism. All the evidence encourages this conclusion; the ideas of socialism fit in with what we know of history, with the facts of our experience now, with all reasoned prospects for society tomorrow. Socialism will work and bring a humane world because it is based on reality. Socialists are the true realists.

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### THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

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The Executive Committee meets 7.30 every Tuesday at 52 Clapham High Street, SW4. Correspondence for the Executive Committee should be sent to the General Secretary at the above address. Letters containing postal orders, cheques to be crossed, made payable to SPGB and sent to A. Waite at the above address. Orders for literature should be sent to the Literature Dept. at the above address. Articles, correspondence and notices for the *Socialist Standard* to be sent to SSPC, 76 Ladbroke Grove, London W11.





## Silver spoon

Clean-cut perfect type that he is, the thought could never have entered the Brylcreemed head of Cecil Parkinson that he would one day be the subject of nationwide salacious jokes. As usually happens, there was much misunderstanding about the affair between Parkinson and Sarah Keays and the lucky child who as a result will find itself born into the British ruling class.

Parkinson's extra-marital activities were denounced as inconsistent with the Tories' well-advertised concern for what they called Victorian values, particularly with the sanctity of the monogamous, nuclear family. Should he, repentant, leave the government? The party? The country? All of this on the assumption that politicians operate on consistent, absolute principles.

But of course the Thatcher concern with the capitalist family was designed as a vote-winner and in any case applied only to that class in society (which does not include Parkinson) which has a subservient role and must be disciplined into it, by one method or another. Now this is perfectly in line with the values of capitalism, whoever is on the throne. It was so in Victorian times and it is so today. Capitalism now, as then, is a society of two conflicting classes, one of them socially superior and privileged and the other socially inferior and disadvantaged.



Parkinson and Keays enjoy a life-style, and assumptions about their futures which result from the exploitation of the working class. It is instructive to compare the treatment of Keays with that of a working-class female who conceives a child without being married. Keays negotiated through her solicitors — which means with a lot of legal

protection and comfort — for what Parkinson assured us would be an adequate financial arrangement for her and the child. A spacious cottage near the home of her rich family in the lush Cotswold countryside was renovated for her.

Meanwhile, in magistrates' courts throughout the land unmarried female workers apply for maintenance orders against similarly impoverished fathers of their children. In most cases, the courts award them a few pounds a week — which is all the father can afford — which is promptly deducted from their Social Security "benefit". The working class should attend to the repression and the indignity represented by that rather than to the personal peccadillos of their arrogant masters.

## A black hope

Jesse Jackson is tall, handsome, energetic and he believes in the American Way, so nobody should be surprised that he is a possible candidate in the next Presidential election.

In fact, the mere possibility is driving thousands of American workers into a frenzy of enthusiasm because Jesse Jackson is not only tall, energetic, etc. etc, but also black. Even more; he says he was there on the balcony when Martin Luther King was shot and that King died in his arms; he kept on a bloodstained T-shirt for a highly-charged TV appearance soon after the assassination. American blacks love him; "Run, Jesse, run" they urge him onwards to the nominating conventions.

Jackson is being lauded, not just as the new hope of American blacks; he is said to have something to offer whites as well — an unprecedented insight into their problems and a unique ability to come up with the answers. "In America," he said during a recent visit to Brixton, "our struggle has shifted from a focus on freedom to the drive for real equality".

It would be most remarkable if a politician who aspires to power did not try to arouse passion and enthusiasm by claims to have a novel solution to the problems which have been troubling the enthusiasts for such a long time. It is only when the power is won and the reality of trying to run capitalism strikes home that the ardour dies and the hero wilts, sometimes into obscurity.

Even before he gets near the convention there are questions hanging over Jackson. In particular, his claim to have been with King when he was shot is denied by fellow black Andrew Young, who undoubtedly was on the balcony. But it is important to consider more than questions. It is time the workers, in America and all over the world, refused to be misled into

hysteria by the promises, the deceptions and the charisma of leaders. Real experience shows that capitalism cannot be other than a divided, repressive social system of impoverishment and fear. No leader can change that.

Run Jesse run? Where to?

## Method unimportant

After their defeat in 1979 the Labour Party went through a Benn-inspired reassessment of their constitution which was supposed to make them a more democratic and more effective organisation. This was as agonising for them as a bad illness and after the treatment they decided, among other changes, on a new method of electing their leader. No longer would this be through the preferences of only Labour MPs; now the whole party, affiliated trade unions and all, would have a vote on the issue.

Triumphant left wing Labourites claimed that they now had a serenely democratic party, better fitted to take power and, in some unexplained way, to force socialism on us. Some of their leaders, on the grounds that too much democracy was a bad thing, left the party to take their place at what they hoped would be the foot of Labour's death-bed. And out of this marvellous new method has emerged Neil Kinnock, who has not so far been justified on the grounds that he is the fruit of a more democratic method of election but because his party hopes that he has the formula to win them back into power.

Whatever system the Labour Party used, the leader who emerged would have carried the same hopes. Kinnock, for his youth and his carefully constructed reputation, would always have been a very strong candidate for the succession. Labour's new constitution, born amid so much pain and dispute, has really changed nothing.

Labour's elected leader is expected to be enough of a crafty opportunist to play the electoral game of deceiving the working class to such effect that it results in a Labour win. As long as the workers — who vote for Labour and Tory governments over British capitalism — continue to acquiesce in this cynicism the problems of modern society will remain. The method through which leaders emerge is unimportant; what matters is the social system which they serve and which they try to control — and the urgent need to abolish it.

The SPGB's Propaganda Committee arranges public meetings and debates with those who seek to defend the profit-system. If you support the Socialist Party (or are a member living some distance from a branch) and would like to help arrange a public meeting in your area, let us know. We can provide a speaker, give you advice about booking a suitable venue and supply literature to be sold at the meeting. Please contact the Propaganda Committee, Dept. S. at Head Office.



# Open letter to Ken Livingstone

Dear Ken,

Your regular comments on the subject of Ireland, together with your recent entertainment by the Sin Fein leadership in west Belfast and your reciprocation of their political hospitality in London, has made you both a devil and an angel in Ireland. You have pleased immensely Sinn Fein and its followers and, in the measure of your pleasing them, earned the anger and hatred of the Ulster loyalists. Of course, the mass of the followers of both elements are members of the working class; both largely conservative and tribally religious; both anti-socialist — despite the misuse of the word "socialist" by Sinn Fein and its occasional application to loyalist paramilitaries by equally ignorant journalists and media commentators.

It is a dangerous game you are playing, Ken — this support for the viewpoint of one essentially sectarian, conservative and anti-socialist faction against another. Certainly it is not a tactic calculated to assist in helping the working class in Ireland to realise that nationalism and unionism are two sides of the same coin. Notwithstanding the "revolutionary" blathering of both sides — and, especially, the side you support — what they kill and maim their fellow-workers for is the same old, failed system of capitalism in which workers produce wealth for their masters in return for a wage that guarantees the continuation of their working-class status: their mere poverty on the job or dire poverty on the dole; their slums and second-rate homes, their mean, restricted lives — even the continuation of the very material conditions out of which the present "troubles" emerged.

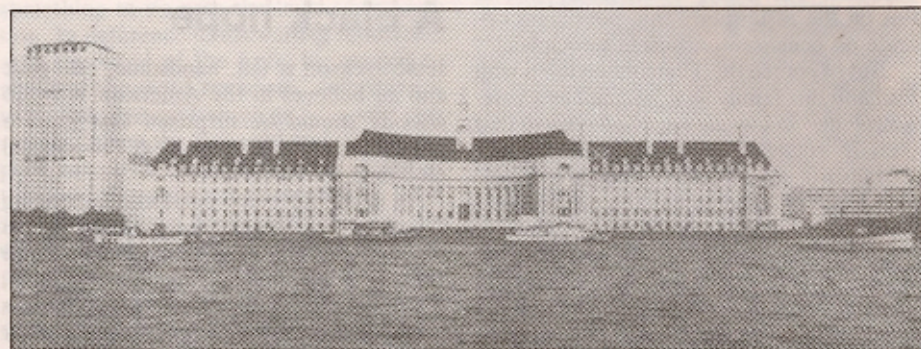
It is possible, of course, that Sinn Fein has convinced you that they have a plan to eliminate these things and create, in a united Ireland, an oasis of social sanity where poverty in all its facets is banished. Indeed, even a dramatic reduction of poverty would probably be as acceptable to the great mass of Protestant loyalists in Northern Ireland as it would be to the majority of impoverished Catholics in the north and in the Republic.

Would it not be cleverer, more humane and less divisive for Sinn Fein to demonstrate openly to their friends and opponents how they can solve, or dramatically ease, the problems of capitalism than to continue killing and maiming and succeeding only in providing opportunities for working-class kids to spend miserable lives in prison.

It is true that in the past Sinn Fein had few opportunities in the media to present its arguments. But it did get opportunities and it did have, and still has, a weekly newspaper which is widely read in Nationalist areas of the North and is doubtless sent to you. Now, of course, its electoral success has opened the door to full media exposure and the Sinn Fein leadership are given star treatment with ample

time and opportunity to state their views. And they do: they talk about the poverty features of capitalism. About the poverty of the poor, bad housing, lack of jobs. Generally, when they mention these effects of capitalism one could be forgiven for thinking that they only afflict those members of the working class who are Catholics; always, unfailingly, Sinn Fein spokespersons ascribe the evils of capitalism to British rule in Ireland.

Get the Brits out! Let Sinn Fein/IRA have control of production and distribution of wealth and they will run the system of wage labour and commodity production in such a way as will solve Ireland's problems. They will succeed where all governments, everywhere, have so far failed: they will run a system based on the exploitation of the working class in the interests of the working class.



Now Ken, we both know that your Labour Party has failed to make any basic change in capitalism and that there is nothing that the Tories have done, or are doing, against the working class that your Labour Party have not also done during its different periods of office. Now it is claimed in the media that you have suggested that Sinn Fein's economic policies are similar to those of the Labour Party. Sinn Fein have claimed to have a social policy based on Christian principles that would involve a synthesis of western "individual" capitalism and Russian-style state capitalism. You might wonder why, given such nonsense, they claim to be socialist except that if you can accept the Labour Party claim to be socialist, it is hardly possible for you to be more confused. But your assertion, Ken, presumably made against the background of some knowledge of the policies and attitudes of Sinn Fein, confuses me — and leaves me worried.

You see Labour policies have been tried in Northern Ireland. Ober-fuhrer Mason and his equally hypocritical colleague Merlyn Rees, both prominent Labourites, ran affairs in Northern Ireland with all the powers of colonial governors. Despite the fact that they were at various times abetted by "left wingers" like Stanley Orme they failed as miserably as Whitelaw and Prior

to remove even one of the social evils on which violence here flourishes.

Being a practical man concerned only with facts you will no doubt appreciate why I am confused by your thinking that Sinn Fein's Labour-style policies will be helpful. On the other hand, I had left out of my reckoning the fact that Labour's traditional excuse for failure is that they had the wrong leaders. Given new leadership... It squares admirably with the simplistic ideas of Sinn Fein, who also emphasise leadership as opposed to socialist principles.

What worries me is your recognition that Sinn Fein have nothing more to contribute to the problems of Ireland than a new rag for the masthead of deception and Labour policies. I say "worries me" because, while I am prepared to accept that Sinn Fein share the nonsense of the Labour

Party, there is something they do not share with the latter: an acknowledgement of the decision of the ballot box.

As I have observed, Labour governments come and go in Britain. They get elected to office when the non-socialist working class there think they might be able to run capitalism less badly than the Tories. They get kicked out again when they demonstrate that they can not. Always, the Labour Party accepts the democratic decision of the electorate to alternate the political administration of capitalism.

This, at least, helps to ensure that the democratic process is maintained; that a genuine Socialist Party offering a real alternative to capitalism is allowed to function, to define and propagate socialism and, ultimately, to achieve a revolutionary majority for the democratic establishment of socialism.

Sinn Fein and the IRA have no democratic tradition; they have an utter contempt for democracy. Their bogus claim to be heirs to the mandate given to Sinn Fein at the last all-Ireland elections in 1918 is exposed by their leftist vapourings. The ultra-conservative, Catholic majority that voted for Sinn Fein candidates in 1918 were voting for the policies of a party dedicated to Irish independence for the purpose of legislating policies of free trade for a fledgling capitalism in southern Ireland. They



would have rejected, and subsequently did reject, even the slightly pinkish policies of social reform offered by the wholly respectable, church-imprimatured, Irish Labour Party.

The Provisional IRA and its political partner, Sinn Féin, were born out of the union of Orange violence and British government indifference. The midwife that attended on the birth of this political mutation was the RUC and the British Army; its swaddling clothes were provided by elements in southern capitalism who feared what they thought (mistakenly) was the growth of socialist ideas in the "official" IRA. The boasted Provo strategy of "an Armalite in one hand and a ballot paper in the other" sums up their contempt for democracy.

There is little hope of them achieving the victory you apparently wish them but, in the unlikely event of them emerging bloody but victorious — could you, Ken, see the collection of unscrupulous, self-mandated, anti-democratic war-lords that are the Sinn Féin leadership, yield to the response of the ballot box when their Labour-style policies had failed as signally

in Ireland as they have repeatedly in Britain?

You have given credibility to an organisation which has become a major barrier to the establishment of such conditions as would presage the growth of socialist ideas in Ireland. I think it reasonable to ask you, Ken, to provide facilities for those who advocate socialism as an answer to the problems of world capitalism — including the so-called "Irish problem". A member, or members, of The World Socialist Party of Ireland will be delighted with an invitation from you to state our case for socialism and against capitalism as favoured by your own party or Provisional Sinn Féin.

Come to that, Ken, it might make the discussion even more interesting if you and a member of Sinn Féin (without the Armalite) were to publicly defend your views in a debate with the World Socialist Movement — either the World Socialist Party of Ireland or the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

Looking forward to your early response,

R Montague, BELFAST

1986, dispenses with much of this obsessional secrecy. It also cuts the list of hazardous waste products requiring special disposal licence, proving that legislation has never been able to prevent illegal fly-tipping by cheap, cowboy operators and now has simply stopped trying.

The painful grind of British law towards a more open system is no guarantee that public activists are in for an easier time of it. Despite the Freedom of Information Act in America, private citizens have their work cut out bringing guilty polluters to book. Whatever the law says, big corporations can and will exert enormous influence over protagonists and referees alike, so that contests are rarely if ever fought on equal terms.

One has only to look at the thalidomide story to demonstrate the vicious self-interest of big business, but what is especially interesting about pollution cases is the frequency with which supposedly impartial government agencies (dealing with coal-oil, agro-chemical and nuclear industrial regulations control) are exposed in squalid little cover-ups and conspiracies with the industries they are meant to monitor. After the 1978 Love Canal disaster in Niagara City — the first federal disaster in history due to chemical pollution, but assuredly not the last — the Environmental Protection Agency were found to have been turning a blind eye to the antics of the Hooker Chemical Company and to have coerced certain of its more zealous local inspectors into doing the same. Despite its policy of not rocking anyone's boat the EPA were publicly capsized by the Carter administration and told to compile a dossier immediately on toxic waste dumps in the USA. Their shamefaced report admitted 300 dumps as immediate hazards, with up to 34,000 others likely to become so. The

## Pollution: capitalism's exhaust system

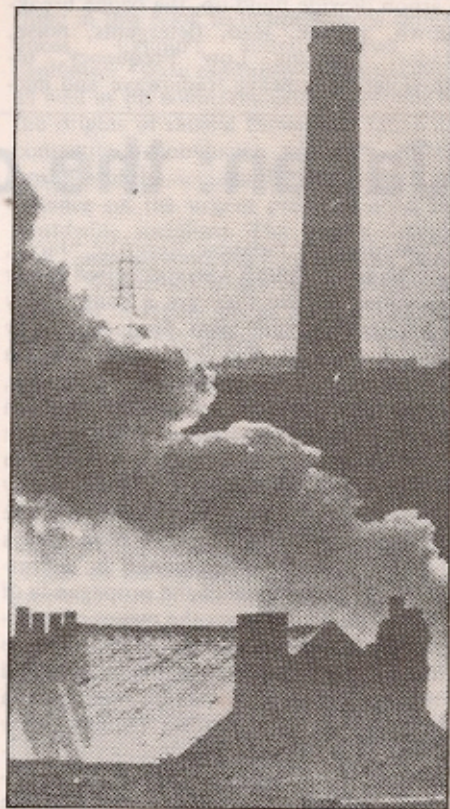
As world population increases by about 2 per cent a year, and as industry expands to meet new market demands — not, be it noted, human needs, since two thirds of that increase belongs to the starving and impoverished Third World who do not constitute a market for capitalist production — so the rate of pollution climbs ever higher.

Most of us, however, are quite content to ignore this obnoxious subject and leave it to the "professionals". Indians may starve, ice-caps may melt and sea-birds drop out of the sky with mercuric convulsions but after all, everyone's got their own problems, haven't they? Besides, who wants to know about the DDT in food, the cadmium in your fags, the lead in the air and all the disgusting things in tapwater? Especially when there's nothing you can do about it? This attitude is very common and to some extent explains why the world has the problems it does. When people begin to see a causal chain linking their own unemployment or poverty to vanishing forests and dead albatrosses, a chain leading to a common culprit, the insane and reckless profit-system, they may be less ready to bow out of all involvement.

But even if we act now to change the system it may be too late to stop serious ecological damage. Free-Enterprise, despite a few token fetters, has not only been able to waste and destroy the present in its mindless quest for the Fast Buck, it has also infected the future, perhaps for generations. Socialism will be stuck with the flesh-rotting legacies of capitalism and it will need every human resource and in-

genuity to deal with them. Meanwhile, for what's left of Nature, time is running out.

Every year, Britain dumps a total of 517,000 tons of mixed industrial/domestic waste in the surrounding seas, and the Irish Sea also enjoys 136,000 curies of radioactive caesium from Windscale alone. The Mediterranean annually swallows 430,000,000,000 tons of waste including raw sewage, detergents, oil, phenols, pesticides and heavy metals. This is quantifiable only because it is legally endorsed. There are no accurate figures for air pollutants like lead, carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide, and even where legal restrictions do exist they are difficult to endorse. There are no figures for land dumps in Britain either because the Department of the Environment has never bothered to make an inventory of them. The chief government research establishment into hazardous waste, at Harwell, told the House of Lords Select Committee in 1981 that it did not know how much was produced in the UK, who produced it, what it was or what they did with it. Indeed British law relies heavily on the voluntary co-operation of industry, despite the fact that in the United States, where experience has taught them less faith in business integrity, over three quarters of all indictments brought against companies are for wilfully flouting safety and anti-pollution regulations. In Britain, by contrast, a Water Authority officer who releases details of pollution by a firm in excess of its agreed limit is liable to imprisonment, while the firm may earn a small fine for the original offence. The new Control of Pollution Act, due to take full effect in





cost of correcting the damage was put at \$46 billion. A US Congress Committee has estimated that 90 per cent of all toxic wastes in America are disposed of "unsafely" — that means on derelict land, in sewers, quarries, mineshafts and local streams. The D of E in Britain remains blasé.

However, pollution isn't only caused by companies dumping waste, legally or otherwise. Pesticides are used extensively in agriculture, and not only do they kill flora or fauna outright, they also get into the food we eat, the soil and the water which drains from it. If farmers were at all interested in producing food for consumption, and not simply for the market, they would in most cases no more use a pesticide than they would dump or burn crops to keep prices high. Pesticides are very often more trouble than they're worth. They may kill pest-predators, directly or by starvation, they actively immunise pests through small doses of spray drift, they kill fish, birds and mammals who accumulate concentrations of compounds through the food-chain, and they even create pests by wiping out the competition. Many compounds are persistent and non-selective, and are known to cause heart disease, nervous disorders, foetal deformities and cancer. DDT and the infamous herbicide 245-T are banned in America, though of course all their food imports remain contaminated. However, it is still lawful for US companies to manufacture banned compounds and sell them to the Third World, who naturally take whatever they can afford. In Sri Lanka alone there are 14,000 cases of pesticide poisoning every year.

All this, and we haven't mentioned asbestos, mercury, dioxin (remember Savese?), cyanide, acid rain, smog, oil, the carbon dioxide build-up, the ozone breakdown, sewage, lead, detergents, noise, radar, Extreme Low Frequency, ultraviolet, microwave, radiowave and nuclear

radiation. There isn't space to go into everything, but for some unparalleled examples of capitalist double-dealing, fraud, lies, cover-ups, suppressions, half-truths, intimidation and even murder you can't do better than look at the nuclear industry.

Accidents happening to star witnesses before public enquiries are well-documented, perhaps the most famous being the case of Karen Silkwood in Oklahoma, 1975. Cover-ups involving police and government officials are legion. Naturally — there's a lot of money at stake here and bad publicity can damage a lot of people. So when Dr. Tamplin links radiation with leukaemia in the '60s, his funds are cut off and his report suppressed. When angry ex-GIs involved in the Smoky A-Bomb Pacific tests all try to sue Uncle Sam for their cancer leukaemia and sterility, the Department of Defense withholds medical records and denies all responsibility. When a nuclear accident in the Ural Mountains causes thirty Russian communities to "disappear", US spy satellites don't notice. When evidence shows that the 5 rem safety standard, on which all plant designs are based, is far too high, it is consistently buried or ignored. When Professor Karl Morgan of Oak Ridge designs a thermal breeder reactor about 270 times safer than the liquid metal fast breeder system to which the US government is already committed, his research is stopped and his report "altered", and when Karen Silkwood compiles a dossier proving that Kerr-McGee Corporation technicians are being told to draw over the x-ray negatives of cracked fuel rods with black felt pen so they can be passed as safe, she is mysteriously killed in a convenient car-crash. While productive forces remain contingent on the demands of the money-market, and while fluctuating economies force producers to cut corners, pollution, along with all these other complaints, must be inevitable. Sometimes governments may try to

tame free enterprise in order to get rid of the bad bits. But to suggest, as many still do, notably the Ecology Party, that one can prevent pollution by legislative and other reformist measures, is to fly in the face of the facts. The Ecology Party's proposals for reducing pollution and reorganising capitalism along healthy, ecological lines are all the more pathetic in their miserable recognition of their own inadequacy. They seek to "form solutions in the light of the problems" and go on to describe how chemical corporations must stop producing their best-selling pesticides and just accept up to a 50 per cent cut in profits, how Western governments in a fit of altruism should subsidise an eightfold increase in the cost of the Third World's malaria control programme and how the Third World itself should stop using inorganic fertilisers, organochlorine compounds like DDT, Dieldrin and 245-T, and high-yield grain hybrids and simply accept a possible tenfold cut in yield. Well-researched though they are, these solutions are unworkable because they do not face up to the real cause of the problem. No matter what cures are proposed, if they do not take into account the basic, cut-throat nature of capitalism, they are doomed to failure. Only by changing the social and economic system which generates the conditions which cause starvation, resource-squandering and pollution will we ever see an end of such despoliation and such ecological insanity.

P J SHANNON

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## Japan: the courage of a few

Yesterday the Japanese were the "Japs", sub-human orientals who specialised in war atrocities. Today they are a congenitally hard-working race who produce quality goods cheaply and efficiently. Which image is the true one? Doubtless neither, for popular images are rarely based on truth or direct experience. Although the Japanese people, as peoples everywhere in the world, have changed and developed by interaction with their environment and the circumstances of history, they have always been seen by outsiders through the distorting lens of the interests and propaganda of those with control over the means of information. The truth is something we have to find out for ourselves. And to help us find out the truth about Japan we now have an excellent new tool. John Crump's new book<sup>1</sup> looks at Japanese development between 1868 and 1918 but also sheds considerable light on the shaping of Japan and its

people since then.

Even in terms of the period explicitly covered, the book's title understates its scope. For apart from describing vividly and authoritatively the events and personalities of the epoch and giving a coherent account of ideas about socialism which were then in circulation, it also paints a broad sweeping picture of the whole make up of Japanese society when different social and political forces at work after the Meiji restoration of 1868 seriously started the process of capitalist development.

Japan has had to telescope its industrialisation into a far shorter period than older established capitalist countries like Britain. Most of it has taken place in the last 30-40 years. But the foundation was laid in the slow accumulating of capital which began in the mid-nineteenth century. And slow it was, for in 1902 little over 1 per cent of Japan's 46m population were

industrial workers and in 1918 the figure was still only 2.6 per cent in a population of 54.7m. The slowness of the process, however, did not stop it being extremely painful for those caught up in it. More painful in fact than it had been for workers in nineteenth century Europe. Crump quotes eye-witness accounts of children of six upwards working eight hours a day for the equivalent of a few pence and cites the admission of the then President of the Industrial Bank of Japan that "the condition of labourers is to be pitied by an impartial observer". Workplace conditions were hellish for both men and women. The women, many of them girls barely in their teens, constituted more than 50 per cent of the workforce. They could be paid less for their work than men. They would labour up to 18 hours a day in the mills, drenched in sweat, in temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. They suffered illness and



premature death on a large scale. Such conditions led, as they have everywhere in developing capitalism, to protests which took the form of collective action by workers to try to force better pay and working conditions from their employers — nascent trade unionism. Official trade unions remained illegal in Japan throughout this period, so workers had no choice but to take illegal action. When they did, they were sometimes successful in their demands, but more often were driven back to work by the forces of a state incomparably more repressive than any in nineteenth century Western Europe. The violent clashes that took place between protesting workers and the police and army occasionally resulted in widespread damage to property and heavy casualties on both sides, as for example in the copper miners' action of 1906-7 and the rice riots of 1918. Many of the copper workers had been soldiers in the mass slaughter of the 1905-6 Russo-Japanese war and, although now demobilised, used their training for violence to unbargained for effect against the forces of state repression.

When disturbances like these took place, many radical minds in Japan mistakenly thought that the workers' revolution had come. They failed to see that these were little more than expressions of despair devoid of ideological content. The radicals were rarely industrial workers themselves and shut their eyes to the most important factor of all — that the Japanese working class was still tiny in comparison to the overwhelmingly peasant-based population. For this reason the mass consciousness needed for a workers' socialist revolution was impossible in Japan at the time.

Any changes which promised to better workers' conditions, however, tended to be referred to as "socialist". And indeed few of the early Japanese "socialists" saw socialism as anything more than trying to make the existing system more humane through social reforms or, at most, nationalising industry under centralised state control, as was to happen later in Russia and other countries. Their notion of socialism was based on the European conception coming mainly from the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), seen as a "powerful older brother". The small groups of Japanese "socialists" that grew up even imitated the SPD in its rifts and controversies over reform or revolution — over whether to concentrate on getting into capitalist parliaments and implementing reforms or whether to go for an immediate and potentially violent revolution aimed at getting rid of parliament and private ownership of capital and establishing state control over the economy. Both these policies were, as in Europe, referred to as "socialism", whereas they were just different recipes for running capitalism. As the author of this book states: "Capital no more ceases to be an anarchic force outside of people's rational control on being collectivised than the state ceases to be an organ of repression on being given a socialist label".



The operating space allowed to these groups by the Japanese authorities was extremely limited and the state had frequent brutal recourse to the infamous "Public Peace Police Law". For the courageous few who dared to speak out, losing their jobs and social ostracism were the least penalties. For many it meant exile, imprisonment or even death. After a small street demonstration in June 1908, a number of the demonstrators were arrested. Among those taken to the police station, Crump says, "Arahata Kanson and Osugi Sakae were ruthlessly beaten up. Stripped naked, both men were dragged by their feet along the corridors, were kicked, beaten and stamped on, the police only ultimately relenting when Arahata had been beaten into unconsciousness. . . . For the heinous crime of demonstrating with red flags, nine socialists received prison sentences of up to 2½ years." Particularly poignant is the case of Kōtoku Shūsui, one of the foremost activists and radical thinkers of the time, who died on the gallows in 1910 along with 10 other comrades for allegedly plotting to assassinate the emperor.

Kōtoku was one of the few who came near to getting away from the SPD reformist-state control conception of socialism and to understanding the idea of socialism as conscious revolution to abolish the wages system by a class conscious majority of workers. But frustration led him, as it led other brave men and women, to contemplate terrorism as a means of revolution. As even the most law-abiding attempts to spread new ideas were met with rising terror by the state, so those who opposed the state became increasingly violent and anarchical in what they advocated. "The means whereby the revolution can be funded is the bomb. The means to destroy the bourgeois class is the bomb", said the

journal *Kakumei* in 1906, and, addressing the Japanese capitalist class, it went on: "There may come a day very soon in which there will be built a large mountain of your bloody bodies". Their terrorism, it is true, was more in words than in actions, but it did not prevent the state from using its own institutionalised apparatus of terror to try to silence them. As Crump does not fail to point out, violent direct action was futile, not only in terms of its prospects of success, but also for the way it went against the fundamental idea of the need for mass public consciousness before socialist revolution could be on the agenda. So when, after the executions of 1910, Arahata Kanson, who had earlier called for the abolition of the wages system, conceived a plan for assassinating the Prime Minister and declared that "the overthrowing of the tyrants who set themselves up against civilisation and humanity is not a utopian illusion", he was succumbing to despair and forgetting that, in Crump's words, "terrorism by its very nature imposes a military discipline on those who resort to it, in place of the self-liberating and creative activity which socialism requires". Hopelessness had also made him forget that socialism could not come from "a conspiratorial minority acting in isolation from the workers whose interests they claimed to have at heart".

Crump, who is a lecturer in Japanese and whose knowledge of the language has enabled him to use original sources, has written a book which is refreshingly readable and contains none of the complicated specialist jargon often found in the work of academics. He acknowledges his debts too. In his introduction he says he "gained a great deal" from the men and women who have worked in the Socialist Party of Great Britain. "Political differences", he says, now separate him from us. Yet there is nothing in this book to indicate those differences. Crump's stated views on capitalism,<sup>2</sup> state capitalism<sup>3</sup> and socialism<sup>4</sup> as well as his sound materialist account of the origins of radical thought in Japan all constitute a convincing advocacy of the position of the Socialist Party and of its insistence on the urgent practical need for worldwide socialism. The book's dedication uncompromisingly proclaims that need: "This study is dedicated to the working class in Japan, in the hope that a day will come when (along with the workers throughout the rest of the world) they will decide to get up off their knees".

HOWARD MOSS

#### References

- 1 *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan*, Croom Helm, 1983.
- 2 "By capitalism I mean a system of society where production is carried on for the purpose of sale on the market, where the majority of people . . . are . . . forced to sell their ability to work for wages or salaries in order to survive, and where there are social classes, the state and money." (Introduction, p. 2.)
- 3 "Now, it is the fact that we do live in an age which has seen a succession of capitalist revolutions in Russia, China and elsewhere which explains why socialism should have come to be widely thought of as a policy of rapid capital ac-



cumulation carried out under the supervision of a strong, centralised state. . . . What was more natural than that, in a world which has seen the drift towards state capitalism on all sides, socialism should have become a convenient ideological device for masking the ugliness of what has in reality been taking place?" (Introduction, p. 4.)

4 "Socialism is given the meaning of a society where production is for the direct satisfaction of human needs without the mediation of a process of buying and selling or exchange, where the means of production are commonly owned and democratically controlled, where there are neither social classes, the state, nor money." (Introduction, p. 3.)



## LETTERS

Dear Editors

I feel it is necessary for people to rid themselves of complacent and apathetic attitudes to politics. We all need to start thinking seriously before we end up dead and beyond thought.

For this reason I have set out schematically the fundamental features of economics which make capitalism irrational and liable to initiate world war. All the swings and roundabouts of capitalist economics cannot be mentioned, but sufficient, I believe, to demonstrate that capitalism cannot be reformed to provide a rational, fair and stable economy.

With reason and goodwill mankind can survive and solve his problems. With hate and blind emotionalism nothing can be done. Although I do not expect reason and goodwill to be ushered in as a consequence of this letter, I do hope to stimulate thought. Without a rational social and economic structure to curb man's natural self-centredness I feel man's prospects for survival are bleak.

### Value

Work creates value and value is represented by what it costs in real terms to maintain a worker and his/her dependants. Value of money derives from this source. There is no other criterion. The value of money is therefore automatically established and regulated and likewise the value of work resulting in goods and services.

### Investment

Money finances work and profit. Profit is surplus money because it passes through the system without financing work. True, the worker handles the profit but it remains surplus because it has not acquired value by work.

### Inflation

Surplus money in the system dilutes the value of money. Decline in money value leads to higher prices, shedding of labour and efforts to increase efficiency. These actions are designed to defend the value of profits. Further measures, related to control of money flow, are often necessary. Once the value of profits has been restored, the measures referred to are no longer relevant and the next cycle of profitable economic activity is resumed.

### Measure

The measure of the changing value of money is given by the ratio, rate of decline in money value relative to the rate at which money acquires value through work. If no surplus money existed in the economy, clearly, there would be no decline in the value of money.

### Conclusion

Capitalism must constantly find new sources for investment because if investment stopped profits could not be made. Armaments and destruction caused by wars are sources for profitable investment.

L. F. HOLLANDS  
Tunbridge Wells

### REPLY

It is true that capitalism operates anarchically — it cannot be reformed in such a way as to solve its basic problems. This is not to say that it is "irrational"; it is an episode in historical and social development and as such it has played a useful role. It is now hampering human progress and must therefore be abolished.

The working class are overflowing with reason and goodwill; if it were otherwise they would not be able to organise and operate the

industrial, financial and commercial organs of capitalism. Human behaviour and ideas are not abstract matters; they spring from the material conditions which we find around us and which we can work on and change. If at times people behave in ways which can be seen as greedy (a concept which will not be valid in a society of free access to wealth) this is because they have been raised and conditioned in a system of class privilege, of riches for the few and scarcity for the many. In such a society, survival itself is often a matter of acquisition. In spite of all these pressures, people continually act in a co-operative, selfless, sacrificial way. For every action which can be seen as self-centred and anti-social there are masses of others which testify to the opposite.

Work — or labour, or the application of human labour-power — produces value or, if we like, it creates value; it adds to the value of the sum of commodities which go into each productive process. The value of a commodity, in broad general terms, is fixed by the amount of socially necessary labour involved in its production. This also applies to the commodity labour power, the value of which depends on what is needed to reproduce the worker's energies and person. Work — or labour — does not have value since it is not a commodity; it is the process through which certain values are transferred into a product and surplus value created. Surplus value is the source of profit. Money acts as the circulator of commodities, through which their prices can be expressed and compared.

Thus profit is not money which has passed through "the system" without financing work; it arises from the process of labour and may be applied as further investment. Workers do not "handle" profit, if by this it is inferred that any of it accrues to them; profit is related to labour since, as we have said, it arises from the surplus value which can be produced only through labour.

The purchasing power of money is reduced — that is, prices rise — through the issue of currency in excess of that required for the circulation of commodities. An inflated currency is inconvertible into gold and can be issued in theoretically unlimited amounts — which seemed to be about to happen in Germany after World War I. Inflation does not lead to a slump; in 1925 this country returned to the Gold Standard, which effectively prevented currency inflation but a few years afterwards British capitalism was caught in a world-wide recession and was forced off the Gold Standard, which allowed currency inflation and caused rising prices.

Capitalism goes in a continuing cycle of boom, slump, recovery, boom, slump, and so on. This process exists independent of financial ruses and adjustments; it is an inescapable result of the basic anarchy of capitalism's system of production for sale and profit.

Capitalism is driven by its need to accumulate capital and in that sense it must always seek new areas of investment. Armaments are one type of commodity and the need to rebuild after a war also offers a wide field for capital investment. This is not to say that, as is so often believed, capitalists in the arms industries are responsible for modern war. Like the other inhuman effects of capitalism, war results from the fundamental character of the system — in this case the conflict of interests inherent in producing wealth for sale as distinct from human use.

L. F. Hollands seems to agree with the proposition that capitalism can neither be controlled nor made to work in the interests of the majority. Clearly, s/he should be considering the socialist alternative.

EDITORS



50 years ago

### German Withdrawal from Disarmament Conference

Most of the comments in the English Press and in the speeches of politicians affect horror at the action of Germany and its leaders. But on the ground common to all the defenders of capitalism in the various nations, Hitler's action has full justification. The Versailles Peace Treaty, under which Germany's armed forces were reduced to the minimum considered necessary to protect capitalism internally, pledged the Allies definitely an explicitly to disarm themselves. That pledge has not been kept and none of the political leaders who made it ever believed that it would be kept. That is why the Russian Government could call their bluff by offering to disarm completely if and when the others would do the same. That is why Hitler can now say that Germany does not want big armaments, only equality with the Allied Governments, either universal disarmament or armaments all round.

Not one of the powers dare dispense with armaments; and that not solely because of their desire to defend frontiers and interests abroad, but because the ruling class everywhere dare not face its own dispossessed class without the protection of armed forces. That is the dominating fact in Germany as it is in the USA, Russia, Britain, Austria and the rest, and it is the one thing nobody ever mentions at disarmament conferences. Hence the unreality of it all. These representatives of capitalism gather together in Geneva to profess their mutually peaceable inclinations, to swear their undying hatred of war, and to reiterate year after year that they are all agreed on speedy disarmament. Every kind of formula is debated and accepted, every kind of scheme for disarmament is applied, and the one thing that never happens is disarmament. (From an editorial "The War Scene: Tragic Farce at Geneva and Moscow". *Socialist Standard*, November 1933.)

# MEETINGS

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# The China trade

Capitalism, according to the *Communist Manifesto*, batters down all Chinese walls. This is illustrated nowhere more clearly than by developments in the Chinese economy over the last few years, especially since 1979 — events more far-reaching in their implications than the holding of China's first-ever fashion show in Peking, or the establishing there of a branch of Maxim's, the fiendishly-expensive Paris restaurant. The imperative need for modernisation of industry and "export-led growth" has caused China to be integrated far more fully into the global capitalist economy than ever before. Those aspects of Chinese society which once appealed so much to Western Maoists have disappeared, and the official propaganda now employs blatantly capitalist criteria and phraseology. Any pretence of an economy based on considerations other than profit has been dropped.

Since 1979, over five billion US dollars have been invested in China by overseas firms, and an even larger sum has been received in loans from governments and international banking organisations. A Joint Venture Law promulgated in July 1979 permitted the setting-up of joint Chinese/overseas-owned companies, with China not even insisting on a controlling interest. Over a hundred such joint ventures have now been established. In May this year, the tax payable by them was cut, and they were exempted from import duties on certain items. The overseas firms that invest are of course allowed to keep the profits they make — profits which can only come from the exploitation of Chinese workers. Regulations concerning overseas companies in joint ventures refer blithely to their "profit and other legitimate income".

The growing volume of overseas investment has necessitated involvement in various areas of international law, such as deciding on the tax and insurance position of the investing companies. Seminars on these matters have been held in Peking, with international experts instructing the Chinese rulers in the ways of the capitalist world. Glossy books and pamphlets have been published, detailing China's attractions to overseas companies (such as low taxes and the absence of labour disputes). In June 1982, a United Nations-sponsored China Investment Promotion Meeting was held in Guangzhou, attended by five hundred overseas businessmen and bankers. Documents of interest to invest in sixty-nine projects were signed there. Any developing country wishing to win investments has to do this kind of thing, and China is no exception.

Moreover, four Special Economic Zones have been set up, intended to offer even more goodies to overseas capitalist firms. The extra attractions include lower rents and even lower taxes. The largest Special Economic Zone is at Shenzhen on the border with Hong Kong. One company

here has announced — for the first time in China since 1949 — the sale of shares, aimed mainly at individual investors in Hong Kong (*Guardian*, 6 July 1983). The dividends these shareholders will receive will, once again, come from the unpaid labour of the Chinese working class. Even outside the Special Economic Zones, local governments fall over themselves to offer incentives to investors. On Hainan Island in the extreme south of China, the Chinese partner in joint ventures takes lower profits than in a Special Economic Zone (the overseas firm gets more) and — astonishingly — workers are paid lower wages (*Beijing Review*, January 1982).



The chief exports relied on to finance the modernisation are coal and oil. China has vast coal reserves, but they are mainly far from the most industrialised areas and from seaports. So priority is being given to new railway lines linking coal-producing areas to the ports. As for oil-producing, China has to rely on joint ventures for the expertise and investment needed to carry out exploration in a number of potentially rich offshore areas.

Another method China is adopting to attract foreign exchange is to expand its tourist trade. New skyscraper luxury hotels — many of them joint ventures — are being built, dwarfing in both size and conception the homes of ordinary Chinese workers. The largest hotel of all, in Nanjing, is complete with swimming pool and rooftop helicopter pad. Even in less opulent surroundings, one night in a hotel can cost almost as much as an average worker's monthly wage.

As far as China's internal economy is concerned, one change has been an end to the "big pot" system, whereby state-owned industrial enterprises turned over all their profits to the state, which then provided finance for individual enterprises from this communal fund. Nowadays, factories simply pay a proportion of their profits to the state in taxes and keep the rest of their profit to dispose of as the factory managers de-

cide. This is claimed to have increased both factory profits and the state's income, on the grounds that more efficient and profitable factories now benefit from higher profits, whereas before they did not. The point is not whether this is a "better" system than previously, just that it makes it quite clear that the Chinese economy, like capitalism everywhere, is based on production for profit.

Corresponding to this reduced role of the state in allocating financial resources has been an increased role of the banking system. Production is now financed more and more by bank loans, and bank managers are encouraged to use strictly capitalist standards in deciding whether or not to grant a loan; a loan which is likely to be unprofitable will be refused. Interest rates to private depositors have been raised, partly to ensure that the compensation paid to former private capitalists is placed with the banks and so is available for lending. In 1982, about a million pounds' worth of treasury bonds were issued, paying a juicy eight per cent interest to individual bondholders. The capitalist nature of the Chinese economy should be plain for all to see.

The agricultural sector has also seen comparable developments, with far more emphasis being given to commune-members cultivating private plots of land and selling the produce on the open market rather than through the state distribution mechanisms. This was just the kind of activity which had been condemned for years as evidence of "capitalist tendencies". Market forces are now more important than before in setting price levels in both agriculture and industry. Of course this can lead to price rises: for instance, one iron and steel company was found to be selling steel billets at 30 per cent above the state price, because demand outstripped supply in a familiar capitalist way.

The developments sketched above do not mean that the nature of Chinese society has changed fundamentally since the death of Chairman Mao. China was no less capitalist during the Cultural Revolution than it is today. It is the existence of commodity production, wage labour and class monopoly of the means of production that determine the existence of capitalism. And capitalism is abolished not by rhetoric about a worker's state, but by a socialist revolution.

PB

## TAPES

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# Why we are hostile

The rhetoric of an outdated system is always painful to the ears, and last month was a period of sustained aural pain, with each of the capitalist parties assembling to indulge in collective fantasies called policy-making. With outlooks ranging from self-deceit to knowing fraudulence, the rosette-wearers of the profit system gathered around their leaders in the hope that by following like sheep they wouldn't be fleeced. The conference season is a period of mass idiocy, of suspension of disbelief, of applause for empty phrases, and faith based on illusion.

The capitalist parties had plenty to discuss. The Conservative Party is in power until 1988 after having won a landslide victory with 43 per cent of the electors voting for it. One wonders what a narrow victory would look like. The Labour Party was smashed at the polls, receiving its worst vote since 1918 and only just maintaining its right to call itself the opposition party. It must have been a bad defeat, for Tony Benn, who lost his seat, rejoiced in the *Guardian* that the election was a great victory for Labour. The SDP won about as many seats as they have policies and, instead of breaking moulds, Roy Jenkins resigned and Dr. Owen was left to look after the wounded. The Liberals did so badly that the Man of Steel went down with depression and took three months off with paid leave, Mediterranean beaches and yellow valium. Unfortunately, the mugs who follow Steel had to be content with going back to work on 10 June and hoping that they aren't proportionately represented in the dole queues.

If appearances are to be believed, all the political parties are supposed to be different: different leaders, different programmes, different philosophies, different manifestoes, different styles. On the surface these distinguishing features are not to be doubted. But more significantly than all of these differing characteristics, these parties which appear to be locked in eternal conflict are fundamentally united in their total commitment to maintaining the capitalist system. They argue passionately about the best schemes for re-organising capitalism so as to make it problem-free, but none of them proposes any policy which is not based on the continuation of the system. Indeed, most of them have no comprehension of the system which they are endeavouring to administer; they are like blind men trying to rearrange the furniture in a slum: firstly, they cannot see the nature of the structure in which they are operating; secondly, they cannot see that the tools are available with which they can demolish the slum and build a palace. So, we do not blame individual members of the capitalist parties — or, more accurately, the different wings of The Capitalist Party — because most of them are quite ignorant of the foolish wastefulness of their political efforts.

Capitalism is a social system. It is not a "policy" which one can either encourage or discourage. It does not come to life only when the Tories are in power. It is not a moral description of an unhappy state of affairs, but an objective label for a set of social relationships which are historically transitory. Capitalism runs in accordance with its own social laws, the most important of which is that wealth takes the form of commodities for sale on the market with a view to profit. It is no accident that needs go unmet under capitalism when it is unprofitable to satisfy them: the problems resulting from market anarchy are endemic to the system. That is why reformism — the assumption that the symptoms of capitalism can be cured without removing the cause — is bound to fail, whatever political form it takes. That is why all the parties of capitalism, whether of its Left or Right wings, are destined to failure.

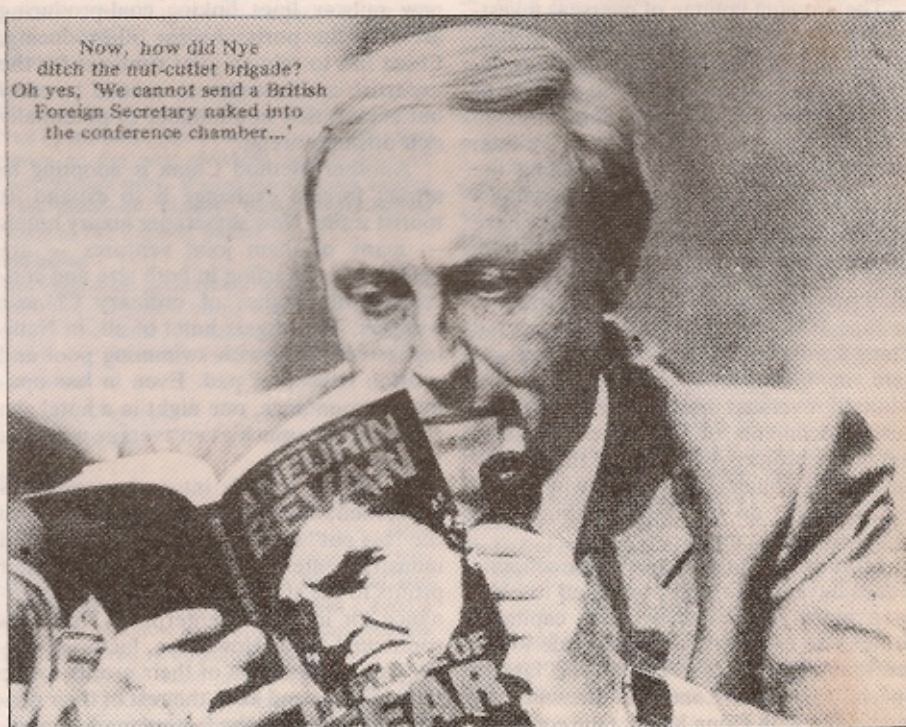
Most workers do not belong to any political party. Indeed, approximately 25 per cent of the electorate in the last general election were so indifferent to the parties of capitalism that they did not bother to vote. Those who vote often do so out of custom ("My father always voted Labour") or for negative reasons ("I'll vote for whoever will keep Thatcher out") or for one policy ("I don't agree with Liberal policy, but I'm in favour of reforming the electoral system"). Thousands of voters will admit that they can see no difference between the parties, but they vote for one or the other in pure hope. There are others who are attracted to parties which seem to be standing for something different: the SDP benefited from this factor as did, to a far lesser extent, the Ecology Party. The number of

workers who are fully committed to the support of all, or even most, of the policies of any of the capitalist parties is remarkably small. For example, one has to search for some time to discover a Labour Party member who will defend the Labour Party as it is; most Labourites belong to a party which they imagine will one day exist, but which bears little relation to the current model. Acquiescence rather than support is what the workers give to the parties of capitalism.

The party conferences, while differing in style, are all concerned with one agenda: how to run capitalism. If you add up all of the people who attended all of the political conferences — and even if you added to that figure all of the people who participated in voting to instruct them on what to do at the conferences — you will arrive at a small fraction of the British population. The fact is that capitalist politics is an activity which only gains any kind of active participation by workers at election time, and even then only about three in four bother. So, although the control of the capitalists over the British state machine is firm and tight, we should not forget the weakness on which that grip is based.

It is well worth watching the political conferences on television. Of course, they are excruciatingly dull; they repeat the same, redundant debates; they cheer the same rousing slogans which will lead to the same bitter disillusion to which the political "solutions" of capitalism have always led. But, for all that, it is fascinating to watch the political dinosaurs at play.

There is not much to say about the SDP conference except that it was dull. The members looked like refugees from Mar-



Now, how did Nye ditch the nut-cutlet brigade? Oh yes, 'We cannot send a British Foreign Secretary naked into the conference chamber...'



tini adverts and the leaders looked like *Blue Peter* models, constructed out of old editorials from the *Guardian*. David Owen stated that the SDP must be committed to the market system and that was about all he needed to have said to qualify for membership of The Capitalist Party of Great Britain. He urged the SDP members to be altruistic (which they would have to be if they were following him) and not to be ashamed of being "middle class". In fact, the majority of the SDP members are members of the working class, forced to sell their labour power for a wage or salary.

The Liberal Party Conference is always a jolly affair to observe. This year's "big issue" was whether there should be a deputy leader and, apparently, Cyril Smith was upset because he was not called to the platform to proclaim his unself-interested views on the matter. The Liberals also decided to unite Ireland, ban Cruise missiles, negotiate for world peace and provide equal rights to all animals, without distinction of sex or fur colour. When they have done all that they will give serious consideration to the legalisation of cannabis — a large amount of which one would have to consume before imagining that the Liberals have a hope in hell of forming a government north of Devon. David Steel, in his Leader's address to the Harrogate faithful, dug out a quotation from Oliver Cromwell about the need to know what you want and to be determined to get it. Oppressed furry animals and depressed woolly minds will be watching Protector Steel and Prince Charles will be keeping his distance from Harrogate.

The Labour Party met in Brighton and the chairman, in his opening address, made it clear that it was time for the Broad Church-goers to unite. They made clear their unity by expelling the editors of *Militant* — a move which united in opposition the vast majority of constituency Labour parties. It is well known by now that the Labour conference is dominated, manipulated and turned into a parody of democracy by the block votes, representing millions of workers, at least half of whom do not vote Labour. What it is always hard to understand is how the majority of ordinary Labour Party members, including the CLP delegates who were repeatedly seen hissing and sighing every time the union juggernauts rolled over their policy proposals, can accept the indignity of membership of an organisation which they do not control. Being a Labourite is a sort of masochistic exercise in which one is repeatedly faced with destroyed hopes and pleasures deferred until next year. Of course, even if the Leftist proposals for capitalism were adopted — withdrawal from NATO, minimum wages, nationalisation "under workers' control", control of the police by well-meaning trendies — the system would still carry on, just as disastrous as ever for those consigned to wage slavery.

For the sake of the pretence of unity, the half-baked radicalism of the Left had to be abandoned and the Conference accepted a document called *New Hope For Britain*, which reads like it has been written

by a computer programmed by Hugh Gaitskell and operated by a man who can't quite make his mind up whether to join the SDP. As ever, the Labour Conference was an orgy of distortion of the concept of socialism. The term was used with such embarrassing misunderstanding of what it means that one can only conclude that socialism is to Labour what Heaven is to the Christian Church: a sort of catch-all term meaning "Something nice that will happen in the future, but not in our lifetime". Labour's socialism is a Utopia — a future dream — a slogan to make the indignities of the present seem easier to administer. As Bernard Shaw once said, the Labour Party has as much to do with socialism as a sewing machine has with frying eggs.

The first task of the Labour faithful was to choose a leader. Needless to say, nobody questioned whether it was necessary to have a leader. None of the followers voted to stop following. In the end, the reformist fantasists fell, appropriately enough, for a "dream ticket". The poverty of imagination of a party which regards Kinnock and Hattersley as a dream is reminiscent of the advertisement-mums who get kicks out of seeing their son's underpants whiter than white. Of course, the Kinnock-Hattersley dream is a fantasy conspired by the pragmatists who seek to sell policies for capitalism like soap powder, with Boy Neil supplying the soft soap. Kinnock is without doubt an able rouser of emotions and an indignant opponent of the injustices of the system which he wants to keep intact. He peppers his reformist rhetoric with undefined references to "socialism", but in his main speech to the conference he, like Owen of Salford, advocated no more than the tried and failed Keynesian plan for investment in British industry.

Two observations can be made about the outlook of the assembled Labourites. The first is their sickening self-righteousness. Dismissing any suggestion that social problems can be solved outside the confines of capitalism (not a single resolution debated in Brighton proposed abolition of the wages system, the market, money, classes and all the rest of capitalism's hallmarks), the Labourites assume that by assuming a posture of moral indignation about the symptoms of the system they are somehow better than the Tory and Alliance reformists. A great deal of passionate language about peace is heard from these people, but when one comes to examine the policy which they overwhelmingly supported what does it add up to? Membership of the NATO mass killing organisation; support for increased expenditure on "civilised" weapons systems, such as the conventional niceties employed in the Falklands war; a policy of economic nationalism, including advocacy of import tariffs and Little Englander opposition to "becoming swallowed up by Europe". The noises of Labourite peace and internationalism are so loud and convincing to the naive that it is easy to forget that, like the other capitalist parties, they have their

# Socialist Standard

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policies for war and their nationalist prejudices. On racism, the Labour Party self-righteously claims to be the defender of the multi-racial outlook. Have they forgotten that it was Labour who first introduced racist immigration legislation into Britain? And, while we are exposing racism, did those who voted for Roy Hattersley as their Deputy Leader know that in the House of Commons on 23 March 1965 he stated:

I now believe that there are social as well as economic arguments and I believe that unrestricted immigration can only produce additional problems, additional suffering and additional hardship unless some kind of limitation is imposed and continued

He went on to say that "We must impose a test which tries to analyse which immigrants . . . are most likely to be assimilated in our national life".

Even on the old Tory favourite, Law and Order, Paul Boateng, the chairperson of the GLC Police Committee, told the conference that Labour must be seen as the party of law and order. Had he forgotten that it was the last Labour government which set up the notorious Special Patrol Group? So, despite the trendy pretensions to radicalism, the Labourites have no right to feel superior to their fellow supporters of capitalism in the other parties when it comes to the reality of politics.

The second feature of the Labour conference was its remarkable negativity. Its anti-Toryism was forceful, but no clues were given as to any serious alternative social strategy. The Labour Left's sectarianism is having the effect of turning Labour into a party which is quite persuasive when booing at the caricatures of Toryism, and even quite good at hissing at the consequences of the party's past actions, but, as for anything positive at which to cheer, there was silence. The Labour Party, when it is not emulating the Tories and running capitalism in the only way it can be run, is a party which is only cut out for opposition. Like Foot before him, Kinnock is a good windbag, possessing all the requisite skills for stirring up the crowd against the wicked Thatcherites, but the politics of negativity and permanent hostility will never achieve anything. So, Labour faces a dilemma: what it has is a forceful leadership which is well cut out to oppose the inevitable disasters of capitalist government — but, in seeking to become the next capitalist government, it requires Kinnock *et al* to abandon the rhetoric of indignation



and to administer the very system which causes that indignation. In so doing, Kinnock and those who support him will have to justify as "realistic" and "unavoidable" the very policies which they are now condemning.

And so to Blackpool, where the world discovered that Cecil Parkinson does have a talent for something after all. The Tory conference is a grotesquely ugly affair; no, not the blue-rinsed dames and executive twits, but the uniformity, smugness and meanness of spirit. The sight of a mob of privileged self-seekers, united in the aim of holding back history by whatever means, is a sickening spectacle for a socialist to behold. As Michael White in the *Guardian* rightly pointed out, all the speeches seemed to be complaining that repressive legislation was not going far enough. In *King Lear* there are two sisters, both of whom are consumed by a perverted desire to strip their father of his power and take it for themselves; one sister, represented at Blackpool by the Ministers, was pragmatic about her greed and wanted to do the dirty bit by bit, but the other was always eager to go further, to push inhumanity to its limits — she was the delegate for Epsom East. The accomplished Ministers know how far they can push the policies of class defence without the workers getting dangerously upset; the relics of evolution in the audience would stop at little short of full resto-

ration of feudalism.

Everything at the Tory conference is — like its counterparts in Eastern Europe — carried unanimously. In only one debate were the daughters of Lear in conflict: the balloted resolution on immigration — or, to be candid, on keeping out blacks. The clearly racist motion, moved by the Billericay branch — a place for which no rational West Indian would entertain dreams of heading — called on the government to encourage black people to accept voluntary repatriation. A few of the old ladies in the front row thought it was about voluntary euthanasia and looked a bit worried, but Harvey Proctor MP, whose culture seems to have been swamped at birth, made it clear that what Mr Hattersley can think of in 1965 the Monday Club can improve upon in 1983. At a Monday Club meeting, shown on *Newsnight* (10 October), Terry Dicks, the Tory MP for Hayes, said that Britain should not provide a home for the undesirables that other countries did not want. Perhaps he is in favour of them being made to take Brother Hattersley's "test". The anti-immigration motion was lost (on the grounds that the government could be relied on to be quite racist enough without the encouragement of Proctor and Dicks) and the rest was clapping.

It was, then, a busy month. Reporting the conferences before n.y television set,

supplied with boiled sweets by the *Socialist Standard's* editorial committee, the only conclusion to be drawn is that the Capitalist Party is as set in its dinosaur ways as ever it was. The conferences are like underground happenings, reported to the world above but having no real effect on the family with no home or the worker without a job or the teenager who is not sure whether she will be an adult before the bomb puts an end to us all. What can one say about the deliberations of the reformists of the Capitalist Party? They are irrelevant to our needs; they have no political answers; their agendas are constructed from the misery which they can never eradicate; their sincerity is wasted and their dishonesty is grotesque. If they never again uttered another word, issued another policy statement, appointed another leader, assembled at another conference, the world could only be better off. They are all "but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party". But we are not only hostile to them — the socialist objective for which we stand is far, far bigger than the miserable band of political relics which stands in our way.

STEVE COLEMAN

## A bourgeoisie in waiting

For Marx, the Britain he had come to live in was a capitalist country governed by a landed oligarchy in the interest of its capitalist class. Men drawn from the ranks of the landowning class occupied the top posts in the state — in the government, in the civil service, in the army and navy, in the church, in the universities — but, in order to retain these privileges for their class, they had to pursue policies that served the interests of those known as the "industrial and commercial classes".

This situation had been established, said Marx, in 1688 in what the Whigs called the Glorious Revolution, when a section of the landowning class allied itself with the middle class to expel King James II and to replace him, by Act of Parliament, with William of Orange, so establishing a constitutional monarchy in England. The industrial revolution had brought to the fore a new, more aggressive section of the middle class — the industrial capitalists — who were no longer satisfied with the 1688 settlement and who wanted the middle class to become the politically ruling, as well as the economically dominant, class in Britain:

A new bourgeoisie of colossal proportions arose; while the old bourgeoisie struggled with the French revolution, the new one conquered the world market. It became so omnipotent that, even before it gained direct political power as a result of the Reform Bill, it forced its opponents to legislate in its interests and in accordance with its require-

ments. It captured direct representation in Parliament and used this to destroy the last remnants of real power left to the landed proprietors. (Review of Guizot's Book, 1850, Exile, p.255).

Even the Tories, the political descendants of that section of the landowning class which had not supported the 1688 revolution, had to pursue pro-middle class politics when in office, as Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) had done when he was briefly Prime Minister in 1834-5 and for a longer period 1841-6. Commenting on Peel's career after his death in a riding accident in 1850, Marx and Engels wrote:

the statesmanship of this son of the bourgeoisie who rose to be leader of the aristocracy consisted in the view that there is today only one real aristocracy: the bourgeoisie. In the light of this belief he continually used his leadership of the landed aristocracy to wring concessions from it for the bourgeoisie. This became evident in the question of Catholic emancipation and the reform of the police, by means of which he increased the bourgeoisie's political power; in the Bank Acts of 1818 and 1844, which strengthened the financial aristocracy; in the tariff reform of 1842 and the free trade legislation of 1846, with which the aristocracy was nothing short of sacrificed to the industrial bourgeoisie (Review, May-October 1850, Revs; pp. 305-6).

The Repeal of the Corn Laws led to a split in the Tory party, the majority under Lord Derby (1799-1869) and Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) disowning Peel. Peel's followers — known as "Peelites" — recognised,

like the Whigs, that aristocratic government could only continue in Britain by pursuing policies in the interest of the capitalist middle class. In doing so, they were following in the footsteps of an earlier group of Tories, associated with the name of Canning (1770-1827) and including Lord Palmerston (1784-1865), who had come to the same conclusion and had gone over to the Whigs at the time of the 1832 Reform Act, a pro-middle class measure which the die-hard Tories did not want to concede.

Marx referred to the Tories, Whigs and Peelites as "three factions of the Aristocracy".<sup>1</sup> When in power, they had no alternative but to govern in the interest of the capitalist middle class:

every Government, whether Whig, Tory, or Coalition, can only keep itself in office, and the bourgeoisie out of office, by doing for them their preliminary work. Go through the records of British legislation since 1825, and you will find that the bourgeoisie is only resisted politically by concession after concession financially. What the Oligarchy fail to comprehend, is, the simple fact that political power is but the offspring of commercial power, and that the class to which they are compelled to yield the latter, will necessarily conquer the former also (NYDT, 6 5 1853, Vol 12, p. 70).

There was in fact a Tory government in office in 1825 but, for Marx, it was the Whigs who made a special policy, almost a profession, of governing in the interest of the middle class:



the Whigs are the *aristocratic representatives* of the Bourgeoisie, of the industrial and commercial middle class. Under the condition that the Bourgeoisie should abandon to them, to an oligarchy of aristocratic families, the monopoly of office, they make to the middle class, and assist it in conquering, all those concessions, which in the course of social and political development have shown themselves to have become *unavoidable and undelayable*. (NYDT, 21 8 1852, Vol 11, p. 330).

Marx had a special dislike for the Whigs. This was partly derived from a reading of the radical journalist and pamphleteer, William Cobbett (1762-1835), whom Marx admired, describing him as "the most able representative, or rather, the creator of old English Radicalism" and as the first person who "stripped the parasitic Whig Oligarchy of their sham liberalism". It was in fact from him that Marx borrowed the term "the Oligarchy" to refer to the governing caste in Britain. But another factor in Marx's special dislike of the Whigs must have been a feeling of disgust at the way in which they seemed to have no other aim than to preserve their position as an exclusive governing caste. Certainly in Marx's attacks on the Whig leaders of the 1850s, Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell (1792-1878), there is an element of moral indignation at their complete lack of political principle.

the franchise so as to weaken aristocratic influence in the House of Commons, was necessary; but the aristocratic parties which together controlled both Houses of Parliament were unable to agree on the terms of such an Act. Reform Bills, proposed by the Whig government in 1852, by the Whig-Peelite Coalition in 1853-4, and by the Tory government in 1859, all failed. The result was that the political situation remained blocked. Artificially prolonged in this way, aristocratic government of a modern capitalist country became more and more obviously inefficient.

Marx, then, did not have a particularly exciting period of British politics to comment on during his period of journalistic activity in the 1850s. But he did clearly identify the general tendency: inefficiency of aristocratic government, break-up of the old parties, preparation by the capitalist middle class to assume full political power. Inevitably, he made errors of judgement such as not foreseeing the formation of a Whig-Peelite coalition after the 1852 elections and declaring in 1858 that the Whigs and Tories were amalgamating into a single party of the landed aristocracy, but his general analysis has been confirmed by later historians.

Below: The Corn Laws are attacked during a bread riot outside the House of Commons in 1815.



British politics in the 1850s was a period of waiting. With the implementation of Free Trade, the capitalist middle class had triumphed economically. It was only a matter of time, as everyone knew, before they would also triumph politically, substituting middle class government for the "outdated, superannuated, obsolete compromise", as Marx once put it, whereby an aristocracy governed in the interest of the capitalist class. Because of the divisions – even the break-up – of the aristocratic parties there was no stable majority in the House of Commons to pass the necessary pro-middle class reforms in the army, the civil service, the law, the universities, the Church. For this to happen a second Reform Act, extending

## Marx in Britain, 1849

When Marx came to Britain in August 1849 there was a Whig government, under Lord John Russell, in office. Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary. In December 1851, however, Palmerston publicly expressed approval for Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état* in France and was forced to resign. In February of the following year he engineered the defeat of the Russell government over its militia bill. A minority Tory government under Lord Derby, with Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer, took over. In July Parliament was dissolved and a general election called. It was just at this

time that Marx himself began to write for the NYDT and he used this opportunity to introduce his American readers to the various political parties in Britain: first the three aristocratic parties (the Tories, the Whigs and the Peelites) and, then, the parties of the capitalist middle class (the Radicals, led by Bright and Cobden, also called the Manchester School, Free Traders and Financial Reformers) and of the working class (the Chartists, whose militant wing was now led by Ernest Jones).

The result of the general election was indecisive. Nobody appeared to have won, though the Tories had a majority if the Peelites, or "Liberal Conservatives", were counted with them. In any event, as was the custom, the previous government under Lord Derby continued in office until defeated in Parliament. This came in December when one of the provisions of Disraeli's budget was rejected by the House of Commons.

The new government which emerged was a coalition between the Whigs and Peelites. The Prime Minister was Lord Aberdeen (1784-1860), a Peelite. Another Peelite, W.E. Gladstone (1809-1898) was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Palmerston became Home Secretary, while Lord John Russell was temporarily Foreign Secretary until Lord Clarendon took over in February 1853. The only other Minister who needs to be mentioned is Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control, in effect the Minister for Indian Affairs, whose proposals for a new Charter for the East India Company were extensively commented on by Marx in the NYDT. The government also had the support of the Radicals and the so-called Irish Brigade, who both supplied nominees to fill some junior Ministerial posts. The Irish Brigade – a party Marx had not mentioned in his pre-election articles in the NYDT – were a group of anti-Tory Irish MPs who represented, essentially, the Irish Catholic middle class which had won a share of political power with the success in 1828 of Daniel O'Connell's (1775-1847) campaign for Catholic Emancipation, as the removal of political discrimination against Catholics was called. O'Connell had in fact been the leader of this parliamentary group until his death in 1847.

The coalition government, however, was unable to deliver the goods to these minority parties in return for their support: a Reform Bill to extend the franchise had to be withdrawn in 1854 because of opposition in Parliament and a Tenant's Rights Bill, aiming to give Irish peasants a minimum of protection against their landlords, was thrown out the same year by the House of Lords. The main concern of the government became foreign rather than home affairs, as a result of the revival of the "Eastern Question" as the problems caused by the decline and weakness of the Ottoman Empire were called, as was reflected in Marx's articles.

In 1853 Tsar Nicolas I revived a Russian claim to be the protector of the Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire (which at this time included what is now Bulgaria as well as parts of modern



Rumania and Yugoslavia). The Sultan refused, but under pressure from the Western Powers did agree to discuss the matter. In October Russian troops entered the Danubian Provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Sultan replied by declaring war. In March 1854 Britain and France joined the war on the Turkish side. Their aim was not to overthrow the Tsarist Empire but the lesser one of preventing the Black Sea and the Dardanelles coming under the control of the Russian navy. To achieve this it was decided to attack and destroy the Russian naval base and fort at Sebastopol in the Crimean peninsula. The siege of Sebastopol was conducted with such incompetence and lack of organisation that demands for an inquiry into the conduct of the war were raised. The Free Trade Radicals around Bright and Cobden opposed the war as costly and unnecessary. Marx, who was very much opposed to Russian expansionism and so a supporter of the war, severely criticised them for this in the articles he wrote for the *NYDT*.

In February 1855 the Aberdeen government was defeated in the House of Commons on a motion to set up a Committee of Inquiry and resigned. A two-week governmental crisis followed in which both Lord John Russell, the Whig leader, and Lord Derby, the Tory leader, failed to form a government. In the end Lord Palmerston himself became, for the first time, Prime Minister. It was this mismanagement of the Crimean War and the resulting political crisis which provided Marx with material for a series of articles in the *NOZ* in which he argues that the British "constitution", the compromise whereby the capitalist class let the aristocrats occupy the top posts in the State on condition that they pursued pro-capitalist policies, was collapsing.

Sebastopol was finally captured in September 1855 and, under the terms of the Treaty of Paris signed in March 1856, both Russia and Turkey were forbidden to maintain a navy in the Black Sea. Russian expansionism had been temporarily stopped. But another war was brewing. In October 1856 the Chinese authorities in Canton boarded the *Arrow*, a Chinese-owned but British-registered ship. Britain demanded an apology and compensation. The Chinese authorities refused and Britain, aided by France, used this as an excuse for commencing the Second Opium War. Cobden again took up an anti-war position and in March 1857 he proposed a motion in the House of Commons — which was carried — criticising the Palmerston government over this attack. Instead of resigning, Palmerston called an immediate general election which he made a vote of confidence in himself and his government. His critics were routed. Cobden lost his seat in the West Riding of Yorkshire and a Tory was even elected in Manchester, the citadel of the Free Traders.

Palmerston remained the Prime Minister, but his second Ministry was to last for less than a year. The war against China was continued and a mutiny of native soldiers in the British Army in India developed into a full-scale revolt. In January 1858 Orsini, an Italian nationalist, tried to assassinate

Napoleon III. When it came out that the plot had been planned in London, Palmerston quickly introduced a Conspiracy to Murder Bill, aimed at curbing the activities of foreign refugees in Britain. When in February an unacceptable amendment to this Bill was carried in the House of Commons Palmerston resigned. Once again, a minority Tory government took over, with Lord Derby as Prime Minister and Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer. This government fell the following year when its Reform Bill — a complicated measure giving more than one vote to certain people as well as extending the franchise a little — was defeated.

In the general election which followed, the Liberals — as the Whigs, Peelites and Radicals were now in the process of becoming — emerged as the largest party. Palmerston, now in his seventy-fifth year, again became Prime Minister. Gladstone, who had resigned from one of Palmerston's previous ministries in 1855, now agreed to serve under him, so putting himself in a strong position to emerge as the future leader of the Liberal Party. Cobden refused the post of President of the Board of Trade (which was nevertheless accepted by another Radical Free Trader, Milner-Gibson (1806-1884)), but he did negotiate on behalf of the government the 1860 Anglo-French Commercial Treaty which considerably liberalised trade between the two countries.

The 1859 Palmerston administration can be seen as the first Liberal government, but even it was unable to pass a second Reform Act. After it was forced to withdraw a Reform Bill in 1860, Palmerston's personal opposition to such a measure delayed any further moves in this direction until after his death at the end of 1865.

ALB

## Footnotes

1. *NYDT* 22/7/1853. Vol 12, p.188. Marx also consciously tried to imitate Cobbett's style as in the article "The House of Lords and the Duke of York's Monument" that appeared in the *People's Paper* on 19 April 1856 (see Marx's letter to Engels, 26 April 1856).
2. Britain had, and has, no written Constitution, at least not in a single document. The British "Constitution" was, and still is, a collection of different statutes and customs governing political practice.

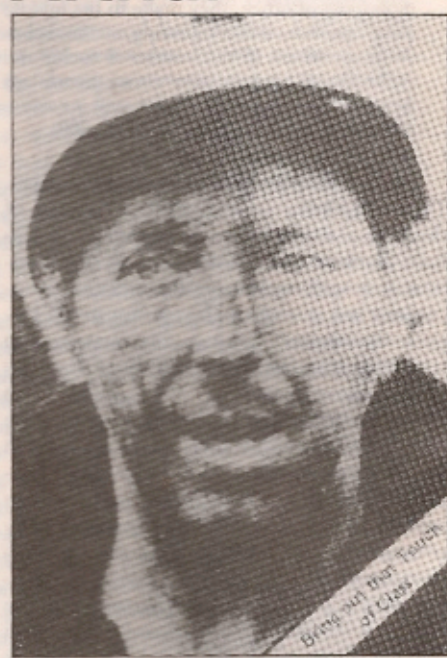
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## Undermining Arthur



Our Arthur, never one to shun publicity, has been at it again:

Arthur Scargill unveiled a blueprint for his perfect Britain yesterday. It would be a sort of golden age of socialism... A Utopia for ordinary folk. Money would disappear — he couldn't quite explain how — and there would be an end to "greed and avarice" (*Daily Mail*, 19 September, 1983).

It's not often that we get to hear this sort of talk from the famous boomer boy from Barnsley, as he is less-than-affectionately portrayed in the press, so let us indulge in a little more:

"When socialism arrived there would be no need for people to own and control industry. But everyone would be allowed to own his own house and garden. And, of course, in a society with an abundance of goods and facilities, there would be no need for money. (*ibid*)

These views, explained Arthur to an incredulous David Frost on TV-am, are not just his own — they happen to be "enshrined" in the rule book of the National Union of Mineworkers.

So, could it be that the socialist movement with its objective of a moneyless world of common ownership, has had all along and unbeknown to all concerned, a staunch and powerful ally in the shape of the NUM? Well, no. Attractive though the thought may be, there is no evidence to suggest that capitalism is being undermined from deep within the bowels of the earth. In the glare of daylight the reality is rather less romantic. When it comes to the election crunch, mineworkers like every other group of workers at the present time will overwhelmingly vote for one or other of the political parties of capitalism. In this case one would imagine that the main beneficiaries of this lack of class consciousness would be the Labour Party which,



most assuredly, does not have the slightest wish to bring about the abolition of the money system. And it is to the Labour Party that the NUM is formally affiliated and of which Arthur Scargill is himself an active member.

Indeed, just as we began to detect something like the faint gleam of gold in Scargill's musings, down came the predictable flood of silt. In socialism: "Everything would be nationalised . . . Industry, banks and insurance companies. The lot" (*ibid*). Though it was not made clear what we are to deposit in our local socialist bank if not money — sticks of rhubarb from the local kolkhoz, perhaps? — at least we now know why "there will be no need for people to own and control industry". The answer is, of course, that the state will take on itself this awesome responsibility, leaving the people free to potter around in all those lovely homes and gardens we are so graciously to be "allowed" to own. In short, while we are to get utopia, the state will have to settle for the ulcers.

Needless to say, no self-respecting left-wing militant in the Labour Party will want to hear of the holy cow of nationalisation being disemboweled in this unseemly fashion. And yet nothing can be more acutely embarrassing than to confront the argument that state ownership has nothing whatsoever to do with the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production that socialists seek. Surely, he or she will protest, these are one and the same thing.

How ironic, then, to find a state insisting quite explicitly, and not just demonstrating through its actions as all states do, that such a distinction does indeed exist. Doubly ironic when that state calls itself a "Marxist" regime. We do not know whether Arthur is aware of the recent pronouncements of fellow "Marxist", the Ethiopian leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam. While in Britain we can only look forward to a "golden age of socialism" in Ethiopia, it would seem that all this has now come to pass. In an address to the nation marking the ninth anniversary of the bloody coup that overthrew Haile Selassie, Colonel Mengistu complained bitterly that his economic goals were not being met because of wastage, laziness and theft and because "nationalised properties are being treated as if they have no owners" (*Guardian*, 15 September 1983).

So you see, there is not a lot to choose between Great Britain Ltd and Messrs Bloggs and Co. But then we shouldn't really have to tell Arthur this. You would have thought that much was patently obvious considering who it is that sits on the opposite side of the miners' negotiating table.

R COX

### IS A THIRD WORLD WAR INEVITABLE?

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## Leadership: image and reality

One of the important pre-requisites for a major political figure is a personality distinctively different from any other politician. Yet all potential leaders must have one thing in common — they must conform to the acurrent interests and values of the ruling class. In the past the bogies of Hitler and Stalin were helpful; in their day they were accepted by workers as essential to the running of society.

Naturally, for capitalists the successful personality reflects the "instinctive" ambitious drive for competition among individuals. All potential candidates in the personality stakes find it beneficial and essential to project the image of being a captain of industry or the right politician or the good union leader. To be successful, candidates must ensure that the selection process carefully irons out all the unacceptable personality traits and enhances all fashionable characteristics. For example, it would be out of character if Shirley Williams' hair did not look like yesterday's mop, and her intellectual image would look as worn out as her clothes if she failed to deliver a new set of proposals at every re-launch of the Alliance. Thatcher, on the other hand, realises that her image rests on concealing the blemishes.

Such role playing requires that participants — politicians in particular — are capable of adjusting to the specific image determined by the changing circumstances of the political arena. The constant changes forced on these personalities have in turn made them a good customer of the image makers, as the joint partnership between Saatchi and Saatchi and Thatcher well illustrated. Success has become measurable, by judging the response of working class ignorance to the performance given by the politician. When Margaret Thatcher

is asked the usual loaded question by the media — why she took the decision to reduce pensions or benefits, she will do her utmost to ensure that her own personal style of response will induce a million or so tears and sighs of sympathy from members of the working class. She tries to convince them that such harsh methods were necessary to guarantee long term gains, the ploy being: what is good for capitalism is good for you. Thatcher's TV appearance would be a non-event unless her own personal hair-dresser was in attendance to ensure that no misplaced hair distorts her image of purity and righteousness in any way.

When Thatcher is faced with striking workers it takes no more than a slight change in her tone of voice, and an affronted expression on her face to satisfy the media. Like all character actors in the personality stakes she realises that such attempts to discredit her and her policies of protecting capitalists' interests only makes her more eligible for the title of top cat, for all political personalities feed off each others' liabilities and disabilities.

Leading contenders among those who are out to discredit Thatcher's image are sometimes known as champions of the working class. This simply means they have taken great care to stamp themselves with the correct branding iron. In the process they also take great care that Thatcher is labelled poisonous for working class consumption. For radicals like Benn and Scargill she represents the destroyer of British Industry. They also find it beneficial, to their own image making, to emphasise the "Iron Lady" aspects of Thatcherism. All such catchphrases are easily acceptable to those who find it more convenient to blame the individual for capitalism's ills rather than the system itself. Critics of Thatcher





like Benn and Scargill have become foremost experts in highlighting the "conspiracy of the media" which in return is out to mould its own brand of personality onto them. Yet without the media, neither Benn nor Scargill would possess the image of champions of the working class. It is a well known ploy within political circles that one of the best ways of getting media coverage is to attack the media for the way it represents you. To the uninitiated such double think has a certain plausibility; after all, Benn and Scargill are so obviously anti-establishment.

However, all this play acting must be confusing to those members of the working class who follow the personality stakes. It must make it very difficult to tell the difference between the next lot of good and bad guys and gals, whom they wish to place on the pedestal of hero worship. Just imagine how confusing it must be for the experts on personality on the left wing when their left-wing heroes of yesteryear become the centre-right heroes of the *status-quo*.

Out of the necessity to gain the workers' overall support and to cater for individual workers' preferences and phobias, politicians are presented as a particular ideal type. Every election is a confirmation that capitalism, despite its defects and outdated

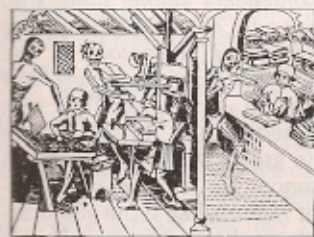
social and productive relationships, only survives because of working class support. What is not widely discussed is the reason for a fundamental contradiction in interests. On the one hand there is the majority who suffer, as a class, the consequences of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, conflict, and human misery. On the other there is a minority who profit, as a class, from these social problems. Yet the majority see no contradiction in this state of affairs and, indeed, regularly supply and provide the means for the minority to live in luxury. Clearly, the working class view of the world is distorted, both by them and for them.

Before capitalism's image-makers can fulfil their role, and in order for them to perpetuate the process, certain conditions must prevail. They thrive on plausibility and promises, depend on a degree of gullibility and ignorance, and literally profit from a poverty of knowledge. Without these pre-conditions no image-making industry would be able to mould the working class into passive and docile individuals. Neil Kinnock for instance keeps the Labour party in the public limelight by painting a far rosier picture than Thatcher of a future period of prosperity. From our present experiences and past cir-

cumstances, we know there have been periods when trade has increased and unemployment decreased. Therefore, like night follows day, we know any talk on future periods of prosperity are not only plausible and a promise but a virtual guarantee. But this does not tell us what will be the main consequences of such a state of affairs: firstly, it will be a period of prosperity for capitalists; secondly, it will be followed by a period when trade will decrease and unemployment will increase.

Of course, even the most inexperienced Public Relations Officer knows that plausibility and promises are inadequate to convince people. After all, promises need constant renewal. What better attraction to capture a person's attention than another one dressed up in the image of a leading politician? At a stroke, plausibility is retained and in addition the human interest angle is provided with a more feasible object against which to register discontent. Political figures therefore serve as a distancing mechanism between the system itself and the working class. The non-solution of problems is presented as a fault in the make-up of the personality, whereas in reality social problems demand a social solution.

CARDIFF GROUP



## Book reviews

### The pilgrim's tale

*Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba.* Paul Hollander (Harper, 1983).

This book provides a comprehensive catalogue of the statements, of varying degrees of fatuity, of those who have visited Russia and other so-called communist countries and have mostly come back with tales of how very much better things are over there. Two quotations show how ridiculous widely respected individuals can become when they put their critical faculties to one side. One of the earliest pilgrims, Bernard Shaw (*Rationalisation of Russia*) had this to say about the Russian prison system:

In England a delinquent enters (the jail, that is) as an ordinary man and comes out as a "criminal type", whereas in Russia he enters... as a criminal type and would come out an ordinary man but for the difficulty of inducing him to come out at all. As far as I could make out they could stay as long as they liked (p.46 in *Political Pilgrims*).

Half a century later Susan Sontag (*Trip to Hanoi*) tells how love transforms the one-party state:

When love enters into the substance of social relations, the connection of people to a single party need not be dehumanizing (p. 273, *ibid*).

The author is of Hungarian extraction and is currently a Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts. He makes quite clear his support of the American side in the main conflict between the rival national groupings of the capitalist world and in common with most present-day observers sees this rivalry as a struggle between capitalism (described as "Western societies") and the "socialism" allegedly practised by the enemy. Thus it is no surprise that when he comes to put his own interpretation on the facts he runs into difficulties. One of these is the definition of the term "intellectual", which to him means "famous writers, well known academics, journalists, artists" and the like, who are "sensitive, insightful and critical". Clearly we are expected to regard their counsel as especially wise and well considered, and to accept that they know better than we do. Indeed, while Hollander rejects the opinions expressed by Bernard Shaw, Julian Huxley, C. Wright Mills and many others of the so-called communist countries, he clearly continues to regard them as great men for their efforts in other directions.

The subject matter of the book is largely confined to those who went on political pilgrimages because they believed that the "socialism" they would find there was radically different from the open capitalism they experienced at home. There are however a few examples of workers who, in contrast to the intellectuals, decided on the basis of what they saw to emigrate. Their reported experiences as members of the working class under "socialism" is interestingly compared to their reception on the original visit. Intellectuals opted to remain at home and not put at risk their positions of relative comfort, many rationalising their decision as "fighting for socialism at home".

Not surprisingly, Hollander classes himself as an intellectual, and his elitist attitude becomes only too obvious when he deals with the cases of Jane Fonda and Shirley MacLaine. These two well known actresses have undertaken the same pilgrimages and responded

in the same manner as the great majority of the club, yet the author cannot bring himself to class them as genuine intellectuals. He described them as "quasi-intellectuals" and arrogantly states: "I would have purified my sources by removing all such questionable or marginal material without any damage to the substance of the book". Fully accepted as having impeccable credentials are a long list of clowns of the looney left, plus Billy Graham and Malcolm Muggeridge. (The latter is considered exceptional by the professor because his experiences as a newspaper reporter converted him into an open supporter of capitalism.)

The professor is also in difficulties when he tries to account for the continued antagonism shown after World War Two by the intellectual pilgrims towards their domestic capitalism. One chapter is entitled "The rejection of Western society in the 1960's and 70's", but even though the second preface is dated July 1982, the remarkable feat is performed of not mentioning the current world slump anywhere in the book. Hollander thinks that the so-called affluence of this period should have quietened the dissenting voices. Combined with his inability to see a better way of living, he becomes more disturbed than puzzled by the continuing waves of protest. The following quote betrays his anxiety:

It seems to me that what has been consequential is not the perception or praise of particular countries and their political systems at any given time. What makes a difference in the long run is the cumulative impact of the denigration intellectuals direct at their own society... The cumulative effect of this steady debunking and preoccupation with the ills of society intensifies the sense of malaise and alienation arising out of the problems and frustrations, many of which are unlikely to be resolved (p. 434 *ibid*).

The quotes from the 1960s and 70s make no mention of any recession, and the author draws attention to the difference between their critique and that of the pre-war pilgrims, who made frequent allusions to the slump of the 1930s. It is of course perfectly correct to take on board new



criticism as further unpleasant features develop. However, the quotations given do show considerable confusion as these "intellectuals" appear to have largely accepted the current ruling class propaganda that capitalism has changed fundamentally for the better. To some extent this arose because they were divorced from, and felt themselves several cuts above, the mass of the workers; in the modern plants of Silicon Valley members of the working class are exploited in the same way as in the inner city factories of Karl Marx's day. The industrial disputes which periodically arise over wages and conditions of work are basically the same now as then.

Hollander recognises that "social criticism must rest on a vision of alternatives". Recognising some of the social evils of capitalism, and refusing to believe that there is no alternative, the pilgrims take so-called communist propaganda at its face value. This leads them in the quest of one Shangri-La after another. First Russia then, when the repressive nature of that regime became too obvious to ignore, Cuba, China, Vietnam...

A factor Hollander leaves out of account in considering the "affluent" period which preceded the current slump is the increase in expectations engendered during that epoch, helped by the tremendous advance in technology compared with pre-war. That this advance continues, the recession notwithstanding, increasing still further the gap between what is and what could be, makes even more apt Murray Bookchin's admirable summing up (*Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 1971):

In attempting to uphold scarcity, toil, poverty and subjugation against the growing potential for post-scarcity, leisure, abundance and freedom, capitalism increasingly emerges as the most irrational, indeed the most artificial society in history... On an even greater scale, potentiality begins to determine and shape one's everyday view of actuality, until a point is reached where everything about the society — including its most "attractive" amenities — seems totally insane, the result of a massive social lunacy.

In his exasperation at the way social criticism lives on, the Professor quotes approvingly the complaint by Bernard Henri Levy (*Barbarism with a Human Face*):

Levy writes: "We have a Marxist urbanism, a Marxist psychoanalysis, a Marxist aesthetic, a Marxist numismatics. There is no longer any realm of knowledge that Marxism fails to have a look at, no area off limits, no taboo territory... no cultural fronts to which it fails to send cohorts of researchers (p. 419 *ibid*)

And so there should be. There are in fact no off limits — areas which exist in limbo, unaffected by the prevailing social relationships of production.

Hollander's essential reasoning seems to be that the only alternative to "our" capitalism is the regime of "communist" countries. As this alternative is worse than what we already have, we are stuck with capitalism and can only try to make it work as well as may be. There is no doubt that the rave reviews which the first edition enjoyed came mainly because of the book's support for this line of reasoning, which has spawned the belief, widespread in America and apparently gaining ground in Britain, that socialism is now an outdated concept. In assisting these confusing trends this book, although helpful in disillusioning workers still over-respectful of so-called intellectuals, does the socialist movement no service.

E C EDGE

## The fool's tale

*The Democratic Alternative* by Peter Hain (Penguin Books).

Like a good comrade I agreed to review one of several books offered to me by the *Socialist Standard*. Like a loser I picked this one and had to plough through 180 pages of muddle-headed nonsense. Peter Hain's intention in writing this book is to outline how he thinks the Labour Party can win back the support it has lost and get back into power. This is to be achieved by what he calls "socialist policies", which inevitably turn out to be just another collection of reforms of capitalism.

For example, he wants to see the pound devalued, exchange controls re-imposed, price controls, a statutory minimum wage, the drug companies nationalised, a windfall tax on bank profits and, for good measure, Bobbies back on the beat. Of course, even if all of these reforms were enacted we would still be living in capitalism: the workers would remain an exploited class.

Hain still believes, despite all the evidence, that capitalism can be managed and controlled by a future Labour government. All that would be needed is the will to do it. He wants the next Labour government to work with the unions in developing yet another "National Plan" which would regulate production, trade and investment. But no government can plan these things with any hope of success because it cannot know what future market conditions will be like or what action other governments may take. In other words it cannot act independently of what is happening in the rest of the world.

Hain's answer to the current slump is the old one of spending-your-way-out-of-it, the spending to be financed by increased government borrowing and heavily taxing the rich. This, he claims, will rejuvenate the economy and bring unemployment down; but it is not as easy as he thinks. Increased government borrowing causes interest rates to rise to levels where many employers cannot afford to borrow just to survive let alone expand. Indeed, in the last few years this "lack of liquidity" has caused many companies to go down the drain and with them their workers' jobs. And the more taxation is raised then the less profits the capitalists will have for re-investment or dividends. If profits fall to the point where investors are unwilling to invest then this, too, will act against reducing unemployment. Incidentally, another of Hain's ideas for raising capital to finance extra government spending is to lay hands on trade union pension funds!

Other sure-fire vote losers proposed by Hain include giving the rank and file of the armed forces a say in the selection of military leaders, turning the diplomatic service into an instrument of "international socialism", and Britain to sell armaments only to those who "... are advancing the cause of human justice". Needless to say he is thinking of the likes of Mugabe of Zimbabwe, whose forces are responsible for the murder of thousands of that country's citizens.

Over and over again Hain reveals his ignorance of even the simplest aspects of capitalism's operations. He thinks that wages are paid out of profits when, of course, profits are what is left to the enterprise after all costs, including wages, have been met. He also thinks that trade unions protect their members against exploitation. If that were the case then those workers would be producing no surplus value at all. What trade unions do, to one degree or another, is to minimise the level of exploitation. As any genuine socialist knows, exploitation of wage-labour by capital is a feature of capitalism and

will only be ended by socialism.

Although this book is studded with references to socialist-this and socialist-that, nowhere does the author reveal any knowledge of what a socialist society entails — a worldwide system of common ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution. A system that will exclude exchange relations and all the things that go with them such as money, prices, wages, profits, banks and pensions. On page 116 Hain writes: "What do we mean by... socialist?", but he never tells us. Maybe this is what he meant when he warned us in the Preface that he wouldn't be "dotting the i's and crossing the t's".

VV

## OBITUARY

### George Deval

With the death on 30 July of George Deval at the age of 78, the SPGB lost a comrade who unstintingly gave of his time and energy working for the Party for more than fifty years. George was introduced to the socialist case during the twenties and became a member in the early thirties. His employment brought him to Birmingham and he helped to re-start the Birmingham Branch during the latter part of the war. He subsequently filled all Branch positions, ending as Secretary. Branch members remember him with gratitude for his dedication and hard work in all the tasks he undertook. We extend our sympathy to his wife and family.



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# MEETINGS

## BLACKPOOL

Wednesday 23 November, 8.00  
**THE BOMB AND THE DOLE QUEUE:  
 ABOLISH THE CAUSE**  
 Speaker: R. Donnelly  
 The King's Arms, Talbot Road  
 (opposite bus station)

## BOLTON

Tuesday 22 November, 8.00  
**IS WORLD WAR THREE INEVITABLE?**  
 Speaker: R. Donnelly  
 The Founders Arms  
 St. George's Street

## CARDIFF

Thursday 10 November, 7.30  
**ECOLOGY: JUST TIDYING UP  
 CAPITALISM**  
 Speaker: Brian Johnson  
 Brownhills Hotel  
 near Central Station

Tuesday 22 November, 7.30  
**WORLD HUNGER**  
 Speaker: Clifford Slapper  
 (venue as above)

Thursday 8 December, 7.30  
**DEATH OF THE LABOUR PARTY:  
 DOES IT MATTER?**  
 Speaker: Ralph Critchfield  
 (venue as above)

## GUILDFORD

Friday 11 November, 8.00  
**MARXISM IN A CHANGING WORLD**  
 Discussion Forum with Asa Briggs  
 (presenter of TV series "Karl Marx: the  
 Legacy") and Steve Coleman (SPGB)  
 Civic Hall, London Road

Friday 9 December, 8.00  
**IS SOCIALISM COMPATIBLE  
 WITH FREEDOM?**  
 Public Debate between Roger Scruton  
 (Editor of "The Salisbury Review")  
 and Howard Moss (SPGB)  
 Woodbridge Road Sports Ground Pavilion

**EDUCATION SERIES:  
 "A CHANGING WORLD"**  
 Woodbridge Road Sports Ground Pavilion

Friday 18 November, 8.00  
**THE ORIGINS OF PRIVATE  
 PROPERTY**  
 Speaker: John Howell

Friday 25 November, 8.00  
**THE EMERGENCE OF CAPITALISM:  
 ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**  
 Speaker: Ron Cook

Friday 2 December, 8.00  
**TWENTIETH CENTURY WORLD  
 CAPITALISM**  
 Speaker: Steve Coleman

Friday 16 December, 8.00  
**SOCIALISM AS A PRACTICAL  
 ALTERNATIVE**  
 Speaker: Peter Lawrence

## CAMDEN OPEN DISCUSSION STUDY CLASSES ON MARXISM

Saturday 26 November, 3.00  
**MARX AND INCREASING MISERY**  
 Speaker: J. D'Arcy  
 Abbey Road Community Centre  
 Belsize Road, NW6  
 (corner of Abbey Road — 31 bus stop)

Sunday 27 November, 3.00  
**THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO**  
 Speaker: J. Carter  
 Marchmont Street Community Centre  
 Marchmont Street, WC1  
 (near Russell Square tube station)

## EAST LONDON

Wednesday 16 November, 8.00  
**IS SOCIALISM WHAT YOU THINK  
 IT IS?**  
 Speaker: C. May  
 St. Bartholomew's Church & Centre  
 292b Barking Road, E6  
 (East Ham Station)

## SOUTH WEST LONDON

Monday 21 November, 8.00  
**THATCHER AND THATCHERISM**  
 Speaker: C. Skelton  
 52 Clapham High Street, SW4

## WEST LONDON

The Old Chiswick Town Hall  
 Turnham Green, W4  
 (corner Sutton Garden Road)

Saturday 3 December, 3.00  
**SOCIALISM, UTOPIAN AND  
 SCIENTIFIC**  
 Speaker: Tony D'Arcy

Saturday 10 December, 3.00  
**SOCIAL LIFE, POLITICS AND  
 SOCIALISM**  
 Speaker: P. Deutz

## MANCHESTER

Thursday 24 November, 8.00  
**CAPITALISM: WHERE IS IT GOING?**  
 Speaker: K. Knight  
 Briton's Protection  
 Lower Mosley Street  
 (corner Gt. Bridgewater Street)

## STOCKPORT

Wednesday 23 November, 7.30  
**INFLATION: ITS CAUSE AND CURE**  
 Speaker: K. Knight  
 TUC Centre, High Street

## SWANSEA

Monday 21 November, 7.30  
**MARXISM**  
 Speaker: Clifford Slapper  
 Central Library, Alexandra Road

## OUTDOOR MEETINGS

**BRISTOL**  
 Durdham Downs. Every Sunday, 3.00

**LONDON**  
 Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park  
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**BOLTON** Tuesdays 8.30. The Founders Arms, St. George's Street. Corres. Bill Lovat, 172 Oxford Grove, Bolton BL1 3BH. Tel. (0204) 43257

**CAMDEN** 2nd and 4th Tuesday in month, 6.00. The Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square). Corres. F. Evans, 164 Gordon Court, Du Cane Road, London W12.

**CROYDON** 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month, 7.30. Ruskin House, Coombe Road, Croydon. Corres. J. Ure, 88 Southbridge Road, Croydon.

**EAST LONDON** 1st Wednesday in month, 8.00. 300 Barking Road, East Ham, E6. 3rd Wednesday in month, 8.00. St. Bartholomew's Church and Centre, 292b Barking Road, E6. Corres. D. Deutz, 4 St. Mary's Avenue, Wanstead E11.

**EDINBURGH** 2nd and 4th Thursday in month, 8.00. First of May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row. Corres. SPGB, c/o First of May Bookshop.

**ENFIELD AND HARINGEY** Wednesdays 8.30. Tottenham Library, 391 High Road, N17. Corres. 17 Dorset Road, N22 4SL

**GLASGOW** Mondays 8.00. Woodside Hall's, Clarendon St. Corres. J. Fleming, 42 Clifford St. Glasgow G51 1PA.

**GUILDFORD** 1st and 4th Friday in month at Friends Meeting House, North Street (opposite library). 2nd Friday at Mount Social Club, the Mount (off Portsmouth Road). All meetings at 8.00. Corres. Brian Rubin, 32 Carmarthen Close, Cove, Farnborough, Hants. Tel. (0252) 512196.

**ISLINGTON** Thursdays 7.30. Prince Albert (1st Floor), 37 Wharfedale Road, N1. Corres. J. Doherty, 74 Mildmay Park, London N1 4RL.

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**MANCHESTER** 1st and 3rd Thursday in month, 8.00. Briton's Protection, Great Bridgewater Street (corner of Lower Mosley Street), Manchester 1. Corres. Brian Selter, 22 Laurel Green, Denton, Manchester. Tel. 061 320 9085 or 061 747 0711

**NORTH WEST LONDON** 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month, 8.00. Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Rd, NW6 (corner of Abbey Road, next to Lillie Langtry pub). Corres. C. May, 71 Ashbourne Close, Woodside Park Road, N12 8SB. Tel. 445 3257

**SOUTHEND** 2nd Wednesday in month, 7.45, at 19 Kingswood Chase, Leigh-on-Sea; 4th Wednesday in month, 7.45, at Balmoral Community Centre, Westcliff. Corres. A. Partner, 28 Hambro Hill, Rayleigh, Essex. Tel. 0268 774974.

**SOUTH WEST LONDON** Mondays (except Bank holidays) 8.00. Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4. Corres. 52 Clapham High Street, SW4.

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**SWANSEA** Mondays, 7.30. Central Library, Alexandra Road, Swansea. Corres. H. K. Moss, 8 Trafalgar Place, Brynmill, Swansea. Tel. (0792) 463 506.

**WEST LONDON** Fridays 8.00. The Old Chiswick Town Hall, Turnham Green (corner of Sutton Garden Road), W4. Corres. c/o the Town Hall.

## DISCUSSION GROUPS

**BRISTOL** 3rd Wednesday in month, 7.30. The Wagon and Horses, Stapleton Road, Bristol.

**CARDIFF** For information about meetings refer to Pontypridd under information.

**DONCASTER** 1st Monday in month, 8.00. Mason's Arms pub, Market Place, Doncaster.

**MEDWAY** The Crown Pub, corner of High Street and Esplanade, Rochester. For details of dates and times contact L. Cox, 110 Bell's Lane, Hoo, Rochester, Kent. Tel. (0634) 250513.

**MID HERTS** 2nd Wednesday in month. Woodhall Community Centre, Welwyn Garden City. Corres. P. Mattingly, 27 Woodstock Road, Broxbourne, Herts. Tel. 6164872.

**MILTON KEYNES** Fortnightly. C. Kincaid, 14 Weavers Hill, MK12 2BD.

**NEWCASTLE ON TYNE** For information about meetings contact Tim Kigallon, 29 Nicholson Terrace, Forest Hall, Newcastle on Tyne NE12 9DP. Tel. 091 2686 771.

**NORTHAMPTON** K. Taylor, 24 Cottesmore Way, Wellingborough, Northants NN5 7HZ.

**READING** E. Tasker, 42 Redhatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 2QR.

**STOKE-ON-TRENT** 1st and 3rd Thursday in month. For details write to Brian Chaddock, 9 Sidmouth Avenue, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON** C. Slapper, SPGB, University College London Union, Gordon Street, London WC1.

**WOLVERHAMPTON** 3rd Wednesday in month, Pasada pub, Lichfield St. 7.30.

## FOR INFORMATION

**BERMONDSEY** R. Simpson, 125 Lynton Road, London SE1 5QX. Tel. 237 5016.

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# THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

## OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

## DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain holds:

1] That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2] That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3] That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4] That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

5] That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6] That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7] That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8] THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Anyone agreeing with the above principles and wishing to join should apply to nearest branch or Head Office.



# Away with capitalism!

To hell with poverty! No, not just that poverty which affects the poor, but the poverty which faces every single member of the working class: the poverty which says that the world and its resources do not belong to you; your role in life is to sell your mental and physical energies as a wage slave.

We don't want humanised poverty — poverty with Ford Fiestas and Sony Hi-Fis. Welfare indignity, with state-apportioned crumbs is no alternative to the public charity of the last century. If you have no alternative than to work hard to make someone else rich you are a worker.

Let's end the working class. The answer is not to make it more comfortable in its slavery: to buy it a suit, give it a mortgage and promise it a pension when it gets too old to milk for profit. Instead of the miserable plea for "fair wages", how about abolishing wages? Why spend your lives in the service of capital when, instead of being legally robbed, the means are at hand to end the robbery of class by class. Why put up with a class-divided society? Let's decide to live as equals.

For how much longer will men and women have to struggle to survive in a society of potential abundance? Struggle to pay the rent, to buy cheap food and shoddy clothes, to go on cut price holidays for a fortnight, to live in homes built on the cheap. Why devote resources to the machinery of killing and the bureaucracy of commerce when the productive forces have reached the point where life could be made happy for us all?

When will the majority say no to the merchants of deception who sit in the parliaments and pick at the scabs of capitalism? Whether they are the Thatcherite louts, with their three-piece smiles and smooth-tongued social vandalism, or the trendy traitors who declare their concern for "the poor" while climbing the greasy pole to the House of Lords, the workers must learn to

reject their poisonous promises with all the force that hostility to capitalism requires.

We do not want "decent Leaders": heroes, vanguards, Fuehrers, Saints, Iron Ladies, benevolent reformers. Above all, beware of the smiling reformist: the leader who is going to remove the symptoms of the capitalist malady while leaving the disease intact. Watch out for their oh-so-sincere leaflets in which they borrow workers' tears to build their careers. Neither leaders nor followers are required — to end the system we must know where we're going and we must know how to get there.

What we want is a society of human equality and how we get it will involve more than just desire. We must take the forces of power — the parliaments, the councils, the guns — from the minority who control them at present. And once we, the conscious working class majority, are in political control — once the parasites have been disarmed, we must disarm them economically. The capitalist minority must be dispossessed — in short, they must be stripped of their ownership and control of the means of living, which they now monopolise. Dispossession does not mean nationalisation whereby the state runs capitalism on behalf of the ruling class, but the complete abolition of all property rights and the establishment of common ownership and democratic control.

No longer should the majority be deceived by the capitalists' conception of socialism. Their "socialism" is a variant of capitalism: either it is distorted to mean the kind of dictatorial police states where workers are exploited under banners proclaiming Marxist slogans or to mean Labour-administered wage slavery. Socialism is not a humane brand of capitalism; it cannot exist within the social confines of the present system. We shall have either capitalism or socialism — and if we have socialism, then the entire structure of this hateful, impoverishing, anti-social jungle will have to go.

Don't be afraid to take the leap into the future. Too many workers have been intimidated by the conditioning of wage slavery to accept the abject misery (or the semi-detached semi-misery) of the capitalist system. Without bosses, without governments, without armies and bombs and borders and price tags they believe that the world will stop. A world freed from the fetters of the market is viewed by some as a chaotic prospect where humanity will destroy itself as a result of our own inherent greed and aggression and competitiveness. What sickening pictures capitalism teaches us to have of ourselves.

Human behaviour, liberated from the commercial jungle of privilege versus poverty, will adapt as it has adapted before. It is capitalism, with its need to condition workers to kill without cause, that tests our natural desire to co-operate. Socialism, a society of equal human co-operation, is the only way in which we can live in peace and allow our human desires to develop fully.

So, the task before us is to make history: not to make it like our ancestors did, by falling victims to the evolving requirements of voracious property interests. Let us not make history that children in the future can ridicule as the foolish antics of deranged primitive beings of class society. For the children of tomorrow will most certainly laugh at what they see now: the loony generals and the beef mountains and the wasteful toil and the pompous leaders and the exploited, politically conditioned millions who are enchained by the price tags on their labour power. They will laugh — or, perhaps, in the society of the socialist future, they will have the respect for victims of capitalism to feel politely sorry for the silly old fools.

The history to be made by the socialist majority is the history of human emancipation. We must create a society where production is solely for need: where houses are built to live in and food to eat and clothes to wear. For, let it never be forgotten, until we have a world society where no person goes short of what can be produced to satisfy their needs, it is fraudulent to claim that we live in a civilisation. A world where millions starve — a world where even a single old person is forced to shiver in the cold because it costs too much to switch on a heater — is not civilised, but fit for nothing but the scrapheap of history.

Who are these respectable advocates of the *status quo* who dare to tell us that capitalism is good for us? Some of them are members of the parasite class themselves — scrounging robbers who live off the fruits of our labours and expect us to be grateful when they build us hospitals and council estates and offer us a few quid for a death grant. The foul-mouthed Victorian values brigade who look into the gutters of their imperial past to find recipes for a profitable future. But even worse than the self-defending vultures are the paid prostitutes who seduce the workers in return for a fat salary and a country estate.

Who is advocating socialism? Judge that not by what people and parties say, but by what they do. Do they talk of socialism and then advocate "patriotism" — do they support "socialist" nuclear bombs, as does Mitterrand, or "socialist" bans on trade unions, as does Jaruzelski, or "socialist" political prisons, as does Andropov? A party which stands for socialism must have an Object and must have clear, unequivocal principles — and at the back of this journal you will find them.

Fellow workers, capitalism exploits and oppresses and destroys. To permit its continuation is an act of folly. But to end it requires activity — that of the Socialist Party and the millions who have yet to become aware of the need for socialism. The millions do not speak with one voice, but you can think with one mind and now you are being urged to think hard about where your political allegiance lies: to the perpetuation of the present or to the creation of a socialist future. How far off that wonderful future is depends in no small way on you.

STEVE COLEMAN

## WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND

### BELFAST MEETING

Sunday 13 November, 3.30

### THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

Speaker: Richard Montague

Ulster People's College,  
30 Adelaide Park  
Admission Free —  
Questions & Discussion

Socialist  
Standard  
— you'd  
get into  
a fine mess  
without  
it...

